

# *Dancing with Śiva*

HINDUISM'S CONTEMPORARY CATECHISM

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami



A pocketbook of Indian spirituality in question-and-answer form, exploring how to know the Divine, honor all creation and see God everywhere, in everyone



# Dancing With Siva

शिवेन सह नर्तनम्

சிவனோடு ஆடுதல்



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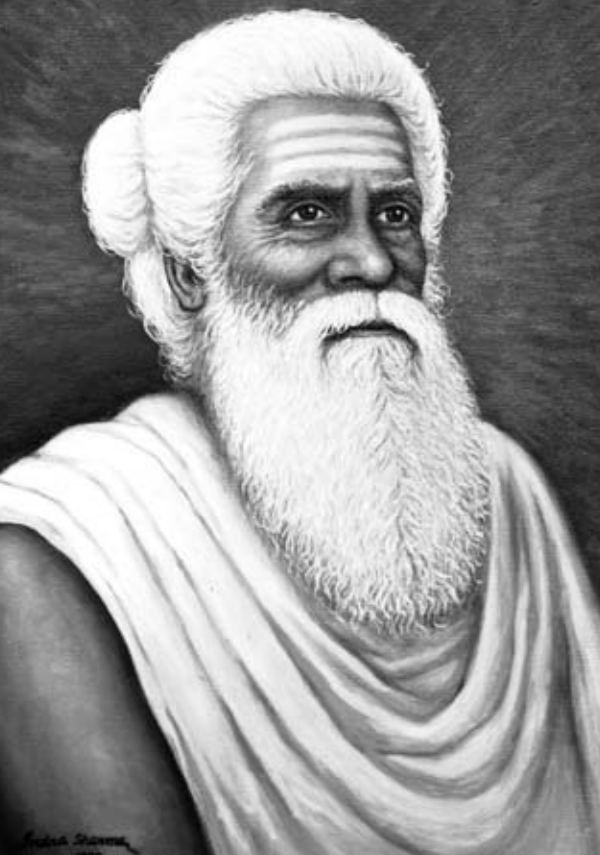
# Dancing With Śiva

Hinduism's  
Contemporary Catechism

शिवेन सह नर्तनम्  
हिन्दुधर्म समकालीन प्रश्नोत्तरम्

சிவனோடு ஆடுதல்  
இந்து சமயத்தின் தற்கால வினா விடை

Satguru Sivaya  
Subramuniaswami



# Dedication

## Samarpaṇam

### समर्पणम्

**G**AṆEŚA, THE LORD OF CATEGORIES WHO REMOVED ALL BARRIERS TO THE MANIFESTATION OF THIS CONTEMPORARY HINDU CATECHISM, TO HIM WE offer our reverent obeisance. This text is dedicated to my *sat-guru*, Sage Yogaswami of Columbuthurai, Sri Lanka, perfect *siddha yogī* and illumined master who knew the Unknowable and held Truth in the palm of his hand. As monarch of the Nandinātha Sampradāya's Kailāsa Paramparā, he infused in me all that you will find herein. Yogaswami (1872-1964) commanded all to seek within, to know the Self and see God Śiva everywhere and in everyone. Among his great sayings: "Know thy Self by thyself. Śiva is doing it all. All is Īiva. Be still." Over 2,000 years ago Rishi Tirumular, of our lineage, aptly conveyed the spirit of *Dancing with Śiva*: "The thirty-six elements dance. Sadāśiva dances. Consciousness dances. Śiva-Śakti dances. The animate and inanimate dance. All these and the *Vedas* dance when the Supreme dances His dance of bliss. The seven worlds as His golden abode, the five *chakras* as His pedestal, the central *kuṇḍalinī śakti* as His divine stage, thus in rapture He dances, He who is Transcendent Light. He dances with the celestials. He dances in the golden hall. He dances with the assembly of silent sages. He dances in song. He dances in ultimate energy. He dances in souls—He who is the Lord of Dances." Tat Astu.





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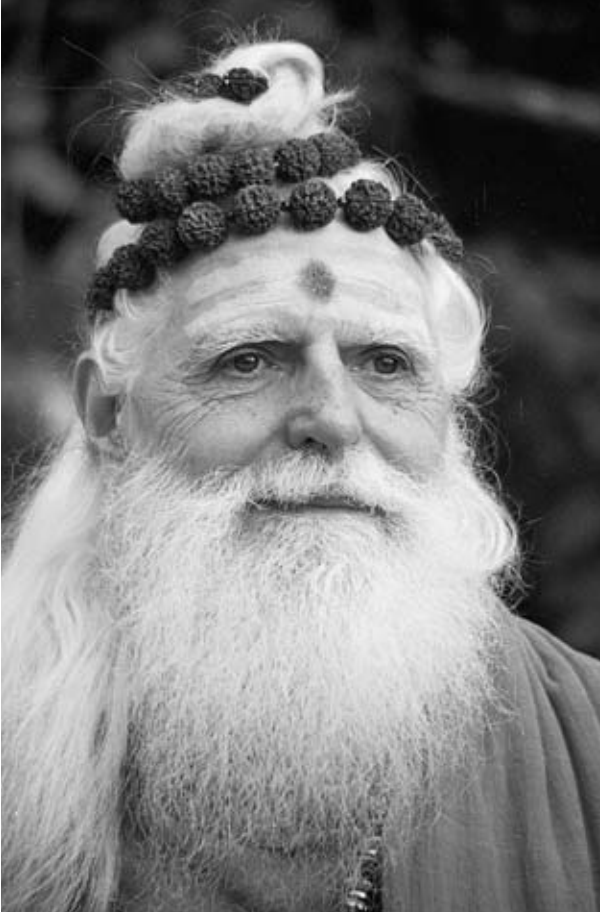
## ART DESCRIPTIONS

**Cover Art:** Artist S. Rajam depicts Lord Śiva in His Himalayan abode, seated on a tiger skin by a mountain stream in *yoga* posture. As Nandi the bull looks on, Śiva creates the cosmic rhythm on His drum as two devotees play the *mṛdaṅga* and three others dance exuberantly nearby.

**Gaṇeśa Dancing:** Famed Indian artist Indra Sharma paints a surprisingly agile dancing Lord Gaṇeśa, Remover of Obstacles and Lord of Dharma, who blesses the beginning of all worthy enterprises.

**Half Title Page:** Pradosha Śiva, by A. Manivelu, dances in a circle, His sixteen hands holding powers and divine implements. The Gods gather in worship, Brahmā plays cymbals, Indra plays the flute, Durga Devī watches in wonderment and Viṣṇu drums on a *ghatam*, clay pot.

**Mandala Art:** The small illustrations for the 31 Maṇḍalas and other sections were drawn by S. Rajam of Chennai.



## Author's Introduction

### *Granthakāra Bhūmikā*

### ग्रन्थकार भूमिका

**I**T IS NO ACCIDENT THAT YOU HAVE FOUND THIS BOOK AND THE TREASURES IT CONTAINS. IT'S ALL PART OF THE DIVINE DANCE OF DESTINY. THE TREASURE you hold in the palm of your hand is divine knowledge, knowledge about you and God, knowledge about how to live a spiritual life, knowledge about what Hindus teach and believe. All of this and more awaits you in the chapters that follow. Put this knowledge into practice, and one day you will hold Truth in the palm of your hand—just as simply.

Dancing with Śiva! What an extraordinary expression of our closeness to God, our creative interplay with God. The Cosmic Dance describes the Hindu view of existence, from the first thunder of the drum in His right hand announcing the Beginning, to the final, all-consuming flames in His left hand pronouncing the End, which but heralds a new Beginning. Thus, dancing with Śiva is everything we do, everything we think and say and feel, from our seeming birth to our so-called death. It is man and God forever engaged in sacred movement. The ancient sages chose the dance to depict God for good reason. Esoterically, movement is the most primal act of existence. Without this simple thing, there would be no universe, no us, no experience, nothing. Light is movement. Thought is movement. Atoms are movement. Life is movement. And, the Hindu holds, God

is movement. Also, dance is the only creative act in which there is perfect oneness of the creator and his creation. Unlike a painting, a poem, an invention or any other artistic impulse, when the dance is over there is no product, no thing to save and enjoy. As with life, we may perceive the dance, never possess it. One cannot separate the dancer from dancing, just as one cannot separate God from the world or from ourselves. Of special meaning is the place where Śiva dances: in the *chitsabhā*, the hall of consciousness. In other words, it happens within each of us.

God Śiva is among the most mysterious, complex, compassionate and profound conceptions of the one Supreme Being to be found in the religions of mankind. He is Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of all existence, the Cosmic Dancer who animates the universe from within. He is pure love, light, energy and consciousness. He is the timeless, formless and spaceless Absolute Reality, Paraśiva. Those who worship the great God Śiva are Śaivites, and their religion is called Śaivite Hinduism. Śaivism represents roughly half, perhaps somewhat more, of Hinduism's one billion members. It shares far more common ground than differences with other Hindu denominations. Still, it is distinct. Unlike the second major Hindu faith, Vaishṇavism (which is strongly dualistic), Śaivism adds a meditative, *yogic* emphasis to a *bhakti* path. For Śaivites, God and soul are essentially one. Unlike Advaita Vedānta, Śaivism is strongly devotional and theistic, believing in a one true God who is Personal Lord and Creator. The term *monistic theism* defines the essential resolution of duality and nonduality which typifies Śaivism's

philosophical stance.

Scholars tell us that Śaivite Hinduism is mankind's oldest religion, the venerable Sanātana Dharma. They have traced its roots back 6-8000 years and more to the advanced Indus Valley civilization. A better-preserved history of Śaivism lies in the ruins of Dholavira, in Gujarat state, where another Indian civilization of about the same antiquity was unearthed in 1998. Yet, sacred writings and legend tell us that there never was a time on the Earth when Śaivism did not exist. Ten of the eleven great religions existing today have a beginning in history, a birth date before which they did not exist. All other religions and faiths were founded by men. Not Śaivism. It had no beginning. It can have no end.

Through history Śaivism has given rise to other faiths, such as Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism, as well as to a multitude of sects within Hinduism itself. This oldest of religions is also among the largest. One out of every six people on the Earth is a Hindu, and recent studies show that Hinduism is among the fastest-growing faiths on the planet. It is neither antiquity nor size which make Śaivism great. The real grandeur derives from a sweet tolerance for the views of others coupled with these: a practical culture, an emphasis on personal spiritual effort and experience, the perception that God is everywhere present—and therefore no aspect of life may be divided from religion—and a joyous devotion to the one Supreme God who all people worship and Śaivism knows as Śiva, “the Auspicious One,” and the knowledge that Truth lies within man himself.

Each Śaivite is unique, yet all seek the same things in life:

to be happy and secure, to be loved and appreciated, to be creative and useful. Śaivite Hinduism has an established culture which fulfills these essential human wants and helps us to understand the world and our place in it. To all devotees it gives guidance in the qualities of character which are so necessary in spiritual life—patience, compassion for others, broadmindedness, humility, self-confidence, industriousness and devotion. Śaivism centers around the home and the temple. Family life is very strong, and precious. Daily devotional services are conducted in the home shrine room. The massive and architecturally priceless temples—and a million other temples and shrines throughout the world—provide daily worship services and sacraments for life's passages. Śaivite worship is more individual than congregational, each approaching God directly. Yet during holy days the temple precincts resound with the genial voices of devotees gathered to sing God Śiva's praises.

### **The Need for a Hindu Catechism**

It is imperative at this time in our history—when the world, our Earth, is on the brink of an inner and outer space age—that we continue to value and learn from ancient Hindu wisdom. Long, long ago, great sages of India unfolded these eternal truths from within themselves and recorded them as scripture to be sung out through the voices of their representatives today. So great was their insight. Truly, this eternal wisdom lives now and will live on into the next generation, the next and the next. Hear the famed prayer offered by *rishis* of yore: “Lead me from unreality to reality. Lead me



from darkness to light. Lead me from death to immortality” (*Śukla Yajur Veda, Brihadāranyaka Upanishad*, 1.3.28).

While other religions are precisely defined by explicit and often unyielding beliefs, Hinduism condones no such constraints. For the Hindu, intuition is far more important than intellect; experience supersedes dogma; and personal realization is held infinitely more precious than outer expressions or affiliations of faith. Philosopher S. Radhakrishnan said it well: “The mechanical faith which depends on authority and wishes to enjoy the consolations of religion without the labor of being religious is quite different from the religious faith which has its roots in experience.” Hindu religious philosophy is based on experience, on personal discovery and testing of things. It does not say, “Believe as others do or suffer.” Rather, it says, “Know thy Self, inquire and be free.”

There are no heretics in Hinduism, for God is everywhere and in all things. In such an open laboratory, Hindu spirituality has grown over the millennia so diverse and rich that it defies definition. Even knowledgeable Hindus, after a lifetime of study, will hesitate to say that Hinduism is one thing and not another. Hinduism, more than any other religion, has encompassed the full spectrum of philosophic positions, and to this day it venerates living exponents of each. Thus it is that one teacher will praise devotion as the ultimate path, while another, spurning devotion, says liberation comes only upon the shattering of this universe’s illusory appearance. How then to understand Hinduism? From the Himalayan vaults, ten thousand streams of

thought descend, their cool waters giving life to all below. These flow together, their convergences becoming broad tributaries. From these, two mighty rivers are born which have through history watered and made green the growth of Indian spirituality—one is Vedānta and the other Siddhānta. This contemporary catechism is the confluence of these two potent traditions into a single torrent, the inundation of the Sanātana Dharma in full, fierce flood and force.

Indeed, the very idea of a Hindu catechism is, for many, unthinkable, a perilous and impertinent pursuit. Until now, no one has attempted such a complete overview, making this a rare, and remarkable, book. One might even say an inevitable one. If, therefore, in undertaking the impossible we have overlooked any lineage, neglected any tradition or vital issue, please call to mind that it is human to err and only God is perfect, and find room in your heart to overlook any oversight.

A simple warning is due. This collection of customs and beliefs is not a detached, scholastic analysis of Hinduism, but a view from the inside, a view of the religion as Hindus themselves would wish their tradition honored and explained to others. Nor is this yet another dogma added to the mountains of doctrines and decrees which have crushed the human spirit throughout history. Every instinct in Hinduism rebels against the doctrine which is oppressive or narrow-minded. Every instinct in Hinduism rejoices in tolerance and in acknowledgement of the many paths, even those that seem to contradict its own. When you believe that God is everywhere, in all there is, wherever it

is, it becomes impossible to hate or injure or seek to aggressively convert others. That is the spirit of this book. It is a transcript of the life lived by hundreds of millions of people, one out of six of the human family. Like Hinduism itself, this contemporary catechism is an ongoing revelation—a dance more than a doctrine.

### **Hinduism Is an Eastern Religion**

To place Hinduism in the context of world thought, it is first important to note that it is a religion of the East. This is a vital fact, for there is a vast difference between the way seekers in the East and the West have traditionally viewed the ultimate questions: “Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going?” The East has tended to be unitive, idealistic and introspective. The West has tended to be dualistic, materialistic and extroverted. Whereas personal inner experience is the crux of religion from the Eastern view, belief and faith are valued most highly in the West. While Eastern religions are accommodating of other views, believing that all paths lead ultimately to God, Western religions tend to be dogmatic, stressing theirs as the one true God and the one true religion.

### **World Religions at a Glance**

We list here how the number of Hindus compares with other religions. Main statistical sources: *World Christian Encyclopedia* and the Worldwatch Institute, based on the 2002 world population.

Hindus:	1 billion	Taoists:	50 million
Muslims:	1.3 billion	Other Faiths:	77 million
Catholics:	1.4 billion	Shintoists:	30 million
Protestants:	600 million	Jews:	18 million
Nonbelievers:	900 million	Sikhs:	16 million
Confucian:	400 million	Jains:	6 million
Buddhists:	360 million	Zoroastrians:	125,000
Tribals:	100 million	Total:	6.25 billion

### **The Hindu View of Life**

The soul, in its intelligence, searches for its Self, slowly ascending the path that leads to enlightenment and liberation. It is an arduous, delightful journey through the cycles of birth, death and rebirth culminating in Self Realization, the direct and personal spiritual experience of God, of the Self, of Truth. This alone among all things in the cosmos can bring freedom from the bondages of ignorance and desire. This is the highest realization. There is none greater. Hindus believe that all men and women are on this path and that all will ultimately reach its summit. It is a glorious and encouraging concept—that every single soul will reach Truth, *moksha*, none left to suffer forever for human frailties and faults.

Hinduism is our planet's original and oldest living religion, with no single founder. For as long as man has lived and roamed across Earth's land and water masses, breathed its air and worshiped in awe its fire, the Sanātana Dharma has been a guide of righteous life for evolving souls. Shortly into the twenty-first century, Hindu adherents will number over

a billion. All of them are Hindus, yes, but they represent a broad range of beliefs, *sādhana*s and mystic goals.

While Hindus believe many diverse and exotic things, there are several bedrock concepts on which virtually all concur. All Hindus worship one Supreme Reality, though they call it by many names, and teach that all souls will ultimately realize the truth of the *Vedas* and *Āgamas*. Hindus believe that there is no eternal hell, no damnation. They concur that there is no intrinsic evil. All is good. All is God. In contrast, Western faiths postulate a living evil force, embodied in Satan, that directly opposes the will of God.

Hindus believe that the universe was created out of God and is permeated by Him—a Supreme Being who both is form and pervades form, who creates, sustains and destroys the universe only to recreate it again in unending cycles. Hindus accept all genuine spiritual paths—from pure monism, which concludes that “God alone exists,” to theistic dualism, which asks, “When shall I know His Grace?” Each soul is free to find his own way, whether by devotion, austerity, meditation, *yoga* or selfless service (*sevā*). Hinduism’s three pillars are temple worship, scripture and the *guru*-disciple tradition. Hinduism strongly declares the validity of the three worlds of existence and the myriad Gods and *devas* residing within them. Festivals, pilgrimage, chanting of holy hymns and home worship are dynamic practices. Love, nonviolence, good conduct and the law of *dharma* define the Hindu path. Hinduism explains that the soul reincarnates until all *karmas* are resolved and God Realization is attained.

Hindus wear the sectarian marks, called *tilaka*, on their foreheads as sacred symbols, distinctive insignia of their heritage. Hinduism is a mystical religion, leading devotees to personally experience its eternal truths within themselves, finally reaching the pinnacle of consciousness where man and God are forever one. They prefer cremation of the body upon death, rather than burial, believing that the soul lives on and will inhabit a new body on Earth.

While Hinduism has many sacred scriptures, all sects ascribe the highest authority to the *Vedas* and *Āgamas*,

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### **What Do Most Hindus Believe?**

There are nine beliefs, or *śraddhā*, which though not exhaustive offer a simple summary of Hindu spirituality.

1. Hindus believe in the divinity of the *Vedas*, the world's most ancient scripture, and venerate the *Āgamas* as equally revealed. These primordial hymns are God's word and the bedrock of Sanātana Dharma, the eternal religion which has neither beginning nor end.
2. Hindus believe in a one, all-pervasive Supreme Being who is both immanent and transcendent, both Creator and Unmanifest Reality.
3. Hindus believe that the universe undergoes endless cycles of creation, preservation and dissolution.
4. Hindus believe in *karma*, the law of cause and effect by which each individual creates his own destiny by his thoughts, words and deeds.
5. Hindus believe that the soul reincarnates, evolving through many births until all *karmas* have been resolved,

though their *Āgamas* differ somewhat. Hinduism's nearly one billion adherents have tens of thousands of sacred temples and shrines, mostly in India, but now located in every community of the global village where Hindus have settled. Its spiritual core is its holy men and women—millions of *sādhus*, *yogīs*, *swāmīs*, *vairāgīs*, saints and *satgurus* who have dedicated their lives to full-time service, devotion and God Realization, and to proclaiming the eternal truths of the Sanātana Dharma.

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and *moksha*, spiritual knowledge and liberation from the cycle of rebirth, is attained. Not a single soul will be eternally deprived of this destiny.

6. Hindus believe that divine beings exist in unseen worlds and that temple worship, rituals, sacraments as well as personal devotionals create a communion with these *devas* and Gods.
7. Hindus believe that a spiritually awakened master, or *satguru*, is essential to know the Transcendent Absolute, as are personal discipline, good conduct, purification, pilgrimage, self-inquiry and meditation.
8. Hindus believe that all life is sacred, to be loved and revered, and therefore practice *ahimsā*, “noninjury.”
9. Hindus believe that no particular religion teaches the only way to salvation above all others, but that all genuine religious paths are facets of God's Pure Love and Light, deserving tolerance and understanding.

### Ways to Study *Dancing with Śiva*

It is our belief that a full study of this catechism will provide a basic understanding of the Hindu religion as it is lived today. We have taught this wisdom for over forty years in many countries, and we know that it is competent to change the lives of people, to bring them closer to their inner Divinity, to strengthen husband-and-wife relationships, cement family unity and establish strong, unbreakable connections with God and the Gods. The key is study, by which we do not mean mere recitation, but living the life described in our venerable traditions. There are seven ways this book can be routinely studied, individually or in groups.

1. There are 155 *ślokas*. An ideal way to study the Catechism is to take one *śloka* and its accompanying *bhāṣya* each day. Study it, meditate on it. Apply it to your own life. Then move on to the next. This will give a daily study of over five months, which can be repeated approximately 2.3 times to make a year of study. It can be repeated year after year, beginning with *śloka* one on the first day of the year.
2. The twelve parts, called *upanishads*, in this catechism, one for each month of the year, may be used as lecture notes or personal study for the month. Each of the twelve is a completely different subject. An *upanishad* is a collection of one, two or three *maṇḍalas*.
3. The thirty-one chapters, called *maṇḍalas*, each containing five *ślokas*, may be studied one each day for a month and then repeated time and time again.
4. Another way to study the book is the “subject study,” choosing concepts which interest you and following their



threads throughout the book. For example, using the index, one could take the word *soul* and explore its various references—the soul's creation, its evolution, old souls and young souls. This can be even more interesting if you explore the Lexicon references as well. Tracing the meaning of terms in this way through the Index and Lexicon is a wonderful tool for lectures, classes, teaching of children and your own personal enjoyment.

5. The fifth way is to read and meditate on the profound Vedic verses found in this *praśnottaram*. They are as alive today as the day they were spoken thousands of years ago. Is it really what they say that stirs the higher consciousness, or is it what they do to the inner currents of the body as they stimulate spirituality?
6. Another way is to simply read the book, cover to cover.
7. A final way, since this book has been magically impressed into the *ākāśa*, is to hold it in your hands and absorb its knowledge or put it under your pillow at night.

### **How to Teach *Dancing with Śiva***

For those serious about conducting regular lectures or classes on *Dancing with Śiva, Hinduism's Contemporary Catechism*, we have created the following simple guide. This approach has various benefits: 1) it gives you a systematic way of presenting the material, without repeating yourself; 2) it relieves you from having to decide what you are going to talk about when lecture or class time comes around and 3) it creates a powerful harmony of minds around the globe among all who are teaching and learning the subject matter

at the same time.

As the basis of a short talk, the *śloka* of the day can be chosen. For a longer discourse, you might discuss an entire *maṇḍala* (containing five *ślokas* and *bhāshyas*. So, for example, if you are giving a lecture on the 12th day of the month, your subject matter would be one or more of the five *ślokas* of *maṇḍala* 12, “The Four Dharmas.” These five *ślokas* and their *bhāshyas* create a complete concept and are more than ample for a well-rounded lecture or seminar.

In olden days in India, before paper was invented, *ślokas* were written on palm leaves (*olai*) in the South, scribed into the tough surface, or written on specially-prepared birch bark (*bhūrja pattra*) in the North. The unbound pages were small, about two inches high and six or eight inches wide. Verses written on them were usually uniform in length, two, three or four lines. To carry forward the refined finesse of those Vedic times, the *ślokas* and *bhāshyas* of this modern catechism have been composed to precise lengths—each *śloka* exactly four lines long and each *bhāshya* exactly twenty-one lines, not a millimeter more or less.

In producing this modern catechism, or *praśnottaram* (literally, “questions and answers”), we kept in mind the need to provide resources so that Hindu institutions and communities around the globe could have, at their fingertips, authentic teachings from which they could locally develop classes and courses and various kinds of study. We encourage scholars, *paṇḍitas*, *swāmīs* and elders everywhere to work with us in translating *Dancing with Śiva* into many of the world’s more than 3,000 languages.

## The Master Course

*Dancing with Śiva* is the first book of *The Master Course* trilogy, which is a detailed summary and explanation of *aṣṭāṅga yoga* according to the traditions of our lineage; the Nandinātha Sampradāya's Kailāsa Paramparā. *Aṣṭāṅga yoga*, also called *rāja yoga*, has eight successive steps, each one dependent upon the one that precedes it. These eight successive steps are *yama* (restraint), *niyama* (observance), *āsana* (posture), *prāṇāyāma* (breath control), *pratyāhāra* (sense withdrawal), *dhāraṇā* (concentration), *dhyāna* (meditation) and *samādhi* (contemplation). Often the uninformed prefer to start on their spiritual path at steps seven and eight, ignoring the other six, and more than often wonder why no immediate and lasting results are obtained. Drawing upon over half a century of teaching and explaining, the trilogy articulates in no uncertain terms why you must begin at the beginning, with a firm foundation of philosophical clarity and good character, and proceed from there. *Dancing with Śiva* lays out the philosophical, Vedic-Āgamic beliefs, attitudes and expectations of the Śaivite Hindu religion, which are so necessary to understand, adopt and uphold in order to make true progress in the areas discussed in the other two books. *Living with Śiva*, the second book of the trilogy, concerns itself with Śaivite lifestyle, culture, family life, character-building and the overcoming of uncomplimentary habits that disturb others as well as oneself. It focuses on *yama*, *niyama* and, in a lesser way, *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma* (*haṭha yoga*). *Merging with Śiva*, the third book of the trilogy, encompasses steps five, six and seven, leading

to eight, all of which is personally experiential once we learn to dance with Śiva and live with Śiva. This means having a good philosophical understanding, a solid commitment, as well as good character, and living the religion. Upon such a foundation, the *yogic* and metaphysical experiences described in *Merging* come naturally and are sustainable. *The Master Course* trilogy is a daily, lifetime study for my devotees worldwide to be explored year after year after year, generation after generation.

### **Awake! Arise!**

As you proceed through *Dancing with Śiva, Hinduism's Contemporary Catechism*, you will come to see that it contains a new presentation of very ancient knowledge. You will soon realize that, somewhere within you, you already know these truths. You will find yourself traveling back in your memory, perhaps several lives, and remembering that you have studied them before in the same way that you are studying them now. This book gives an organized approach as to what to say to the youth and the adults of our religion, and how to explain our complex heritage to those of other faiths. It also gives truth-seekers who have discovered the mystical realities a coherent and complete philosophical context through which they can understand and continue to pursue the often unbidden experiences they encounter. It validates their inner realizations and gives them the confidence to persevere.

A new breed of souls is even now coming up in the world. They are fearless because they are strong. They do not fear

death, ill-health or lack of knowledge. Their only qualification is that they love and worship God and the Gods. They have no magic formula. They are selling nothing. They need nothing. They are who they are. You may be one of them.

So, proceed with confidence. Success is assured. You cannot fail if *bhakti* is integrated with *jñāna*, *Siddhānta* with *Vedānta*, *Āgamas* with *Vedas*, and Hindu Dharma with everyday life. Yea, this is the secure path, the safe path, leading to knowledge, experience and recognition, then realization, of your true, divine, eternal Self. Awake, arise and stop not until the goal is reached! It is no accident that you have found this book and the treasures it contains.

Love and blessings to you from this and inner worlds,

**Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami**

162nd Jagadāchārya of the Nandinātha

Sampradāya's Kailāsa Paramparā

Guru Mahāsannidhānam

Kauai Aadheenam, Hawaii

Satguru Pūrṇimā, July 4, 2001

Hindu year of Vṛisha, 5103



# Paramā̃tma Darśanam परमात्मदर्शनम्



## Self Realization

Subtlest of the subtle, greatest of the great, the *ātman* is hidden in the cave of the heart of all beings. He who, free from all urges, beholds Him overcomes sorrow, seeing by grace of the Creator, the Lord and His glory.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Śvetāśvatara  
Upanishad 3.20. VE, 735*

## Who Am I? Where Did I Come From?

### ŚLOKA 1

*Rishis* proclaim that we are not our body, mind or emotions. We are divine souls on a wondrous journey. We came from God, live in God and are evolving into oneness with God. We are, in truth, the Truth we seek. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

We are immortal souls living and growing in the great school of earthly experience in which we have lived many lives. Vedic *rishis* have given us courage by uttering the simple truth, “God is the Life of our life.” A great sage carried it further by saying there is one thing God cannot do: God cannot separate Himself from us. This is because God is our life. God is the life in the birds. God is the life in the fish. God is the life in the animals. Becoming aware of this Life energy in all that lives is becoming aware of God’s loving presence within us. We are the undying consciousness and energy flowing through all things. Deep inside we are perfect this very moment, and we have only to discover and live up to this perfection to be whole. Our energy and God’s energy are the same, ever coming out of the void. We are all beautiful children of God. Each day we should try to see the life energy in trees, birds, animals and people. When we do, we are seeing God Śiva in action. The *Vedas* affirm, “He who knows God as the Life of life, the Eye of the eye, the Ear of the ear, the Mind of the mind—he indeed comprehends fully the Cause of all causes.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.



## Where Am I Going? What Is My Path?

### ŚLOKA 2

We are all growing toward God, and experience is the path. Through experience we mature out of fear into fearlessness, out of anger into love, out of conflict into peace, out of darkness into light and union in God. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

We have taken birth in a physical body to grow and evolve into our divine potential. We are inwardly already one with God. Our religion contains the knowledge of how to realize this oneness and not create unwanted experiences along the way. The peerless path is following the way of our spiritual forefathers, discovering the mystical meaning of the scriptures. The peerless path is commitment, study, discipline, practice and the maturing of *yoga* into wisdom. In the beginning stages, we suffer until we learn. Learning leads us to service; and selfless service is the beginning of spiritual striving. Service leads us to understanding. Understanding leads us to meditate deeply and without distractions. Finally, meditation leads us to surrender in God. This is the straight and certain path, the *San Mārga*, leading to Self Realization—the inmost purpose of life—and subsequently to *moksha*, freedom from rebirth. The *Vedas* wisely affirm, “By austerity, goodness is obtained. From goodness, understanding is reached. From understanding, the Self is obtained, and he who obtains the Self is freed from the cycle of birth and death.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is Meant by “Dancing with Śiva”?

### ŚLOKA 3

All motion begins in God and ends in God. The whole universe is engaged in a whirling flow of change and activity. This is Śiva’s dance. We are all dancing with Śiva, and He with us. Ultimately, we are Śiva dancing. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

The world is seen as it truly is—sacred—when we behold Śiva’s cosmic dance. Everything in the universe, all that we see, hear and imagine, is movement. Galaxies soar in movement; atoms swirl in movement. All movement is Śiva’s dance. When we fight this movement and think it should be other than it is, we are reluctantly dancing with Śiva. We are stubbornly resisting, holding ourselves apart, criticizing the natural processes and movements around us. It is by understanding the eternal truths that we bring all areas of our mind into the knowledge of how to accept what is and not wish it to be otherwise. Once this happens, we begin to consciously dance with Śiva, to move with the sacred flow that surrounds us, to accept praise and blame, joy and sorrow, prosperity and adversity in equanimity, the fruit of understanding. We are then gracefully, in unrestrained surrender, dancing with Śiva. The *Vedas* state, “The cosmic soul is truly the whole universe, the immortal source of all creation, all action, all meditation. Whoever discovers Him, hidden deep within, cuts through the bonds of ignorance even during his life on Earth.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## How Can We Learn to Dance with Śiva?

### ŚLOKA 4

Dance is movement, and the most exquisite dance is the most disciplined dance. Hindu spiritual disciplines lead to oneness with God through self-reflection, surrender, personal transformation and the many *yogas*. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

To progress on the path, we study the *Vedas*, other scriptures and our *guru's* teachings and make every effort to apply these philosophical truths to daily experience. We strive to understand the mind in its fourfold nature: *chitta*, consciousness; *manas*, instinctive mind; *buddhi*, intellectual mind; and *ahankāra*, ego or I-maker. We perform *japa*, meditation and *yoga* each day. Such spiritual discipline is known as *sādhana*. It is the mystical, mental, physical and devotional exercise that enables us to dance with Śiva by bringing inner advancement, changes in perception and improvements in character. *Sādhana* allows us to live in the refined and cultured soul nature, rather than in the outer, instinctive or intellectual spheres. For consistent progress, *sādhana* should be performed regularly, without fail, at the same time each day, preferably in the early hours before dawn. The most important *sādhana*s are the challenges and practices given by one's *guru*. The *Vedas* caution, "The Self cannot be attained by the weak, nor by the careless, nor through aimless disciplines. But if one who knows strives by right means, his soul enters the abode of God." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Ultimate Goal of Earthly Life?

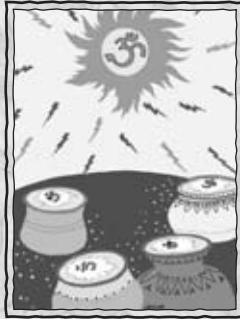
### ŚLOKA 5

The ultimate goal of life on Earth is to realize the Self, the rare attainment of *nirvikalpa samādhī*. Each soul discovers its Śivaness, Absolute Reality, Paraśiva—the timeless, formless, spaceless Self God. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

The realization of the Self, Paraśiva, is the destiny of each soul, attainable through renunciation, sustained meditation and frying the seeds of *karmas* yet to germinate. It is the gateway to *moksha*, liberation from rebirth. The Self lies beyond the thinking mind, beyond the feeling nature, beyond action or any movement of even the highest state of consciousness. The Self God is more solid than a neutron star, more elusive than empty space, more intimate than thought and feeling. It is ultimate reality itself, the innermost Truth all seekers seek. It is well worth striving for. It is well worth struggling to bring the mind under the dominion of the will. After the Self is realized, the mind is seen for the unreality that it truly is. Because Self Realization must be experienced in a physical body, the soul cycles back again and again into flesh to dance with Śiva, live with Śiva and ultimately merge with Śiva in undifferentiated oneness. Yea, *jīva* is actually Śiva. The *Vedas* explain, “As water poured into water, milk poured into milk, *ghee* into *ghee* become one without differentiation, even so the individual soul and the Supreme Self become one.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

# Hindu Dharmah हिन्दुधर्मः



## Hinduism

He is the Ancient One. He created the beings of Earth  
and Heaven in days of yore in order divine. The six  
faiths seek the feet but of the One Primal, Peerless God.  
And in them all, He pervades in measure appropriate.

*Tirumantiram 1557. TM*

## What Are Hinduism's Principal Sects?

### ŚLOKA 6

The Sanātana Dharma, or “eternal faith,” known today as Hinduism, is a family of religions that accept the authority of the *Vedas*. Its four principal denominations are Śaivism, Śāktism, Vaishṇavism and Smārtism. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

The world's billion Hindus, one-sixth of the human family, are organized in four main denominations, each distinguished by its Supreme Deity. For Vaishṇavites, Lord Viṣṇu is God. For Śaivites, God is Śiva. For Śāktas, Goddess Śakti is supreme. For Smārtas, liberal Hindus, the choice of Deity is left to the devotee. Each has a multitude of *guru* lineages, religious leaders, priesthoods, sacred literature, monastic communities, schools, pilgrimage centers and tens of thousands of temples. They possess a wealth of art and architecture, philosophy and scholarship. These four sects hold such divergent beliefs that each is a complete and independent religion. Yet, they share a vast heritage of culture and belief—*karma*, *dharma*, reincarnation, all-pervasive Divinity, temple worship, sacraments, manifold Deities, the *guru-śishya* tradition and the *Vedas* as scriptural authority. While India is home to most Hindus, large communities flourish worldwide. The *Vedas* elaborate, “He is Brahmā. He is Śiva. He is Indra. He is the immutable, the supreme, the self-luminous. He is Viṣṇu. He is life. He is time. He is the fire, and He is the moon.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Deeply Mystical Śaiva Sect?

### ŚLOKA 7

Śaivism is the world's oldest religion. Worshiping God Śiva, the compassionate One, it stresses potent disciplines, high philosophy, the *guru's* centrality and *bhakti-rāja-siddha yoga* leading to oneness with Śiva within. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Śaivism is ancient, truly ageless, for it has no beginning. It is the precursor of the many-faceted religion now termed Hinduism. Scholars trace the roots of Śiva worship back more than 8,000 years to the advanced Indus Valley civilization. But sacred writings tell us there never was a time when Śaivism did not exist. Modern history records six main schools: Śaiva Siddhānta, Pāśupatism, Kāshmir Śaivism, Vīra Śaivism, Siddha Siddhānta and Śiva Advaita. Śaivism's grandeur and beauty are found in a practical culture, an enlightened view of man's place in the universe and a profound system of temple mysticism and *siddha yoga*. It provides knowledge of man's evolution from God and back to God, of the soul's unfoldment and awakening guided by enlightened sages. Like all the sects, its majority are devout families, headed by hundreds of orders of *swāmīs* and *sādhus* who follow the fiery, world-renouncing path to *moksha*. The *Vedas* state, "By knowing Śiva, the Auspicious One who is hidden in all things, exceedingly fine, like film arising from clarified butter, the One embracer of the universe—by realizing God, one is released from all fetters." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Magic and Power of Śāktism?

ŚLOKA 8

Śāktism reveres the Supreme as the Divine Mother, Śakti or Devī, in Her many forms, both gentle and fierce. Śāktas use *mantra*, *tantra*, *yantra*, *yoga* and *pūjā* to invoke cosmic forces and awaken the *kuṇḍalinī* power. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

While worship of the Divine Mother extends beyond the pale of history, Śākta Hinduism arose as an organized sect in India around the fifth century. Today it has four expressions—devotional, folk-shamanic, *yogic* and universalist—all invoking the fierce power of Kālī or Durgā, or the benign grace of Pārvatī or Ambikā. Śākta devotionalists use *pūjā* rites, especially to the Śrī Chakra *yantra*, to establish intimacy with the Goddess. Shamanic Śāktism employs magic, trance mediumship, firewalking and animal sacrifice for healing, fertility, prophecy and power. Śākta *yogīs* seek to awaken the sleeping Goddess Kuṇḍalinī and unite her with Śiva in the *sahasrāra chakra*. Śākta universalists follow the reformed Vedāntic tradition exemplified by Sri Rāmakrishna. “Left-hand” *tantric* rites transcend traditional ethical codes. Śāktism is chiefly *advaitic*, defining the soul’s destiny as complete identity with the Unmanifest, Śiva. Central scriptures are the *Vedas*, *Śākta Āgamas* and *Purāṇas*. The *Devī Gītā* extols, “We bow down to the universal soul of all. Above and below and in all four directions, Mother of the universe, we bow.” Aum Chaṇḍikāyai Namaḥ.



## What Is the Devotional Vaishṇava Sect?

### ŚLOKA 9

Vaishṇavism is an ancient Hindu sect centering on the worship of Lord Viṣṇu and His incarnations, especially Kṛiṣṇa and Rāma. Largely dualistic, profoundly devotional, it is rich in saints, temples and scriptures. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

The worship of Viṣṇu, meaning “pervader,” dates back to Vedic times. The Pañcharātra and Bhāgavata sects were popular prior to 300 BCE. Today’s five Vaishṇava schools emerged in the middle ages, founded by Ramanuja, Madhva, Nimbarka, Vallabha and Chaitanya. Vaishṇavism stresses *prapatti*, single-pointed surrender to Viṣṇu, or His ten or more incarnations, called *avatāras*. *Japa* is a key devotional *sādhana*, as is ecstatic chanting and dancing, called *kīrtana*. Temple worship and festivals are elaborately observed. Philosophically, Vaishṇavism ranges from Madhva’s pure dualism to Ramanuja’s qualified nondualism to Vallabha’s nearly monistic vision. God and soul are everlastingly distinct. The soul’s destiny, through God’s grace, is to eternally worship and enjoy Him. While generally nonascetic, advocating *bhakti* as the highest path, Vaishṇavism has a strong monastic community. Central scriptures are the *Ve-das*, *Vaishṇava Āgamas*, *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas*. The *Bhagavad Gītā* states, “On those who meditate on Me and worship with undivided heart, I confer attainment of what they have not, and preserve what they have.” Aum Namō Nārāyaṇya.

## What Is the Universalistic Smārta Sect?

### ŚLOKA 10

Smārtism is an ancient brāhminical tradition reformed by Sankara in the ninth century. Worshiping six forms of God, this liberal Hindu path is monistic, nonsectarian, meditative and philosophical. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

Smārta means a follower of classical *smṛiti*, particularly the *Dharma Śāstras*, *Purāṇas* and *Itihāsas*. Smārtas revere the *Ve-das* and honor the *Āgamas*. Today this faith is synonymous with the teachings of Adi Sankara, the monk-philosopher known as *shaṇmata sthāpanāchārya*, “founder of the six-sect system.” He campaigned India-wide to consolidate the Hindu faiths of his time under the banner of Advaita Vedānta. To unify the worship, he popularized the ancient Smārta five-Deity altar—Gaṇapati, Sūrya, Viṣṇu, Śiva and Śakti—and added Kumāra. From these, devotees may choose their “preferred Deity,” or *Ishta Devatā*. Each God is but a reflection of the one Saṁguṇa Brahman. Sankara organized hundreds of monasteries into a ten-order, *daśanāmī* system, which now has five pontifical centers. He wrote profuse commentaries on the *Upanishads*, *Brahma Sūtras* and *Bhagavad Gītā*. Sankara proclaimed, “It is the one Reality which appears to our ignorance as a manifold universe of names and forms and changes. Like the gold of which many ornaments are made, it remains in itself unchanged. Such is Brahman, and That art Thou.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Śaiva Dharmah शैवधर्मः



## Śaivite Hinduism

The path of Śiva is the proven path. It led them to Hara. It is the royal path that renowned souls have walked. By this path divine, the devout pervade the universe. That path do seek, enter and persevere.

*Tirumantiram 1563. TM*

## What Is the Nature of Śaivite Theology?

### ŚLOKA 11

Śaivism proclaims: God Śiva is Love, both immanent and transcendent, both the creator and the creation. This world is the arena of our evolution, which leads by stages to *moksha*, liberation from birth and death. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Śaivism is a unique religion in which God is both manifest and unmanifest, dual and nondual, within us and outside of us. It is not strictly pantheistic, polytheistic or monotheistic. Its predominant theology is known as monistic theism, panentheism, or Advaita Īśvaravāda. Monism, the opposite of dualism, is the doctrine that reality is a one whole or existence without independent parts. Theism is belief in God and the Gods, both immanent and transcendent. Śaivism is monistic in its belief in a one reality and in the advaitic, or nondual, identity of man with that reality. Śaivism is theistic in its belief in the Gods, and in God Śiva as a loving, personal Lord, immanent in the world. Śaivism expresses the oneness of Pati-*paśu-pāśa*, God-soul-world, encompassing the nondual and the dual, faithfully carrying forth both Vedānta and Siddhānta, the pristine Sanātana Dharma of the *Vedas* and *Śaiva Āgamas*. The *Tirumantiram* states, “Śuddha Śaivas meditate on these as their religious path: Oneself, Absolute Reality and the Primal Soul; the categories three: God, soul and bonds; immaculate liberation and all that fetters the soul.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## How Do Śaivites Regard Other Faiths?

### ŚLOKA 12

Religious beliefs are manifold and different. Śaivites, understanding the strength of this diversity, wholeheartedly respect and encourage all who believe in God. They honor the fact that Truth is one, paths are many. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Since the inner intent of all religions is to bind man back to God, Śaivite Hindus seek not to interfere with anyone's faith or practice. We believe that there is no exclusive path, no one way for all. Śaivites profoundly know that God Śiva is the same Supreme Being in whom peoples of all faiths find solace, peace and liberation. Nonetheless, we realize that all religions are not the same. Each has its unique beliefs, practices, goals and paths of attainment, and the doctrines of one often conflict with those of another. Even this should never be cause for religious tension or intolerance. Śaivites respect all religious traditions and the people within them. They know that good citizens and stable societies are created from groups of religious people. Śaivite leaders support and participate in ecumenical gatherings with all religions. Still, Śaivites defend their faith, proceed contentedly with their practices and avoid the enchantment of other ways, be they ancient or modern. The *Vedas* explain, "Let us have concord with our own people, and concord with people who are strangers to us. Aśvins, create between us and the strangers a unity of hearts." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## How Does Śaivism Stay Contemporary?

### ŚLOKA 13

Inner truths never change, but outer forms of practice and observance do evolve. Śaivism seeks to preserve its mystical teachings while adapting to the cultural, social and technological changes of each recurrent age. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Śaivism is an orthodox religion, conservative in its ways and yet pliant and understanding. It is simultaneously the most demanding spiritual path and the most forgiving. Śaivites have persisted through many ages through successfully adapting work, service and skills according to the times while internalizing worship and holding firmly to the eternal values. The outer form of service or occupation does not change the spiritual search. Be he a skilled farmer, factory worker, village merchant, computer programmer or corporate executive, the Śaivite is served well by his religion. Śaivism has all of the facilities for the education of humankind back to the Source. Each futuristic age does not reflect a difference in the Śaivite's relationship with his family, *kula guru*, teacher, *satguru*, Gods or God in his daily religious life. The Śaiva Dharma: it is now as it always was. The *Vedas* implore: "O self-luminous Divine, remove the veil of ignorance from before me, that I may behold your light. Reveal to me the spirit of the scriptures. May the truth of the scriptures be ever present to me. May I seek day and night to realize what I learn from the sages." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Nature of Life for Śaivites?

### ŚLOKA 14

To the Śaivite Hindu, all of life is sacred. All of life is religion. Thus, Śaivite art is sacred art, Śaivite music is devotional music, and the Śaivite's business is not only his livelihood, it is his service to man and God. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Each Śaivite is unique in his or her quest, yet all seek the same things in life: to be happy and secure, loved and appreciated, creative and useful. Śaivism has an established culture which fulfills these essential human wants and helps us understand the world and our place in it. To all devotees it gives guidance in the qualities of character so necessary in spiritual life: patience, compassion, broadmindedness, humility, industriousness and devotion. Śaivism centers around the home and the temple. Monastic life is its core and its power. Family life is strong and precious. Śaivism possesses a wealth of art and architecture, traditions of music, art, drama and dance, and a treasury of philosophy and scholarship. Śaivite temples provide worship services daily. Scriptures give ethical guidelines. *Satgurus* offer advanced spiritual initiation. These three—temples, scriptures and *satgurus*—are our pillars of faith. The *Vedas* implore, “O learned people, may we with our ears listen to what is beneficial, may we see with our eyes what is beneficial. May we, engaged in your praises, enjoy with firm limbs and sound bodies, a full term of life dedicated to God.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Symbolism of Śiva's Dance?

### ŚLOKA 15

The symbolism of Śiva Naṭarāja is religion, art and science merged as one. In God's endless dance of creation, preservation, destruction and paired graces is hidden a deep understanding of our universe. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

Naṭarāja, the King of Dance, has four arms. The upper right hand holds the drum from which creation issues forth. The lower right hand is raised in blessing, betokening preservation. The upper left hand holds a flame, which is destruction, the dissolution of form. The right leg, representing obscuring grace, stands upon Apasmārapurusha, a soul temporarily earth-bound by its own sloth, confusion and forgetfulness. The uplifted left leg is revealing grace, which releases the mature soul from bondage. The lower left hand gestures toward that holy foot in assurance that Śiva's grace is the refuge for everyone, the way to liberation. The circle of fire represents the cosmos and especially consciousness. The all-devouring form looming above is Mahākāla, "Great Time." The cobra around Naṭarāja's waist is *kuṇḍalinī śakti*, the soul-impelling cosmic power resident within all. Naṭarāja's dance is not just a symbol. It is taking place within each of us, at the atomic level, this very moment. The *Āgamas* proclaim, "The birth of the world, its maintenance, its destruction, the soul's obscuration and liberation are the five acts of His dance." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.



Śivah  
शिवः



## Our Supreme God

Fire is His head, the sun and moon His eyes, space His ears, the *Vedas* His speech, the wind His breath, the universe His heart. From His feet the Earth has originated. Verily, He is the inner Self of all beings.

*Atharva Veda, Muṇḍaka Upanishad 2.1.4. EH, 159-160*

## What Is the Nature of Our God Śiva?

### ŚLOKA 16

God Śiva is all and in all, one without a second, the Supreme Being and only Absolute Reality. He is Pati, our Lord, immanent and transcendent. To create, preserve, destroy, conceal and reveal are His five powers. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

God Śiva is a one being, yet we understand Him in three perfections: Absolute Reality, Pure Consciousness and Primal Soul. As Absolute Reality, Śiva is unmanifest, unchanging and transcendent, the Self God, timeless, formless and spaceless. As Pure Consciousness, Śiva is the manifest primal substance, pure love and light flowing through all form, existing everywhere in time and space as infinite intelligence and power. As Primal Soul, Śiva is the five-fold manifestation: Brahmā, the creator; Viṣṇu, the preserver; Rudra, the destroyer; Maheśvara, the veiling Lord, and Sadāśiva, the revealer. He is our personal Lord, source of all three worlds. Our divine Father-Mother protects, nurtures and guides us, veiling Truth as we evolve, revealing it when we are mature enough to receive God's bountiful grace. God Śiva is all and in all, great beyond our conception, a sacred mystery that can be known in direct communion. Yea, when Śiva is known, all is known. The *Vedas* state: "That part of Him which is characterized by *tamas* is called Rudra. That part of Him which belongs to *rajas* is Brahmā. That part of Him which belongs to *sattva* is Viṣṇu." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is God Śiva's Unmanifest Reality?

ŚLOKA 17

**Paraśiva is God Śiva's Unmanifest Reality or Absolute Being, distinguished from His other two perfections, which are manifest and of the nature of form. Paraśiva is the fullness of everything, the absence of nothing. Aum.**

BHĀSHYA

Paraśiva, the Self God, must be realized to be known, does not exist, yet seems to exist; yet existence itself and all states of mind, being and experiential patterns could not exist but for this ultimate reality of God. Such is the great mystery that *yogīs*, *ṛishis*, saints and sages have realized through the ages. To discover Paraśiva, the *yogī* penetrates deep into contemplation. As thoughts arise in his mind, mental concepts of the world or of the God he seeks, he silently repeats, “*Neti, neti*—it is not this; it is not that.” His quieted consciousness expands into Satchidānanda. He is everywhere, permeating all form in this blissful state. He remembers his goal, which lies beyond bliss, and holds firmly to “*Neti, neti*—this is not that for which I seek.” Through *prāṇāyāma*, through *mantra*, through *tantra*, wielding an indomitable will, the last forces of form, time and space subside, as the *yogī*, deep in *nirvikalpa samādhi*, merges into Paraśiva. The *Vedas* explain, “Self-resplendent, formless, unoriginated and pure, that all-pervading being is both within and without. He transcends even the transcendent, unmanifest, causal state of the universe.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is God Śiva's Pure Consciousness?

ŚLOKA 18

Parāśakti is pure consciousness, the substratum or primal substance flowing through all form. It is Śiva's inscrutable presence, the ultimate ground and being of all that exists, without which nothing could endure. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Parāśakti, "Supreme Energy," is called by many names: silence, love, being, power and all-knowingness. It is Sat-chidānanda—existence-consciousness-bliss—that pristine force of being which is undifferentiated, totally aware of itself, without an object of its awareness. It radiates as divine light, energy and knowing. Out of Paraśiva ever comes Parāśakti, the first manifestation of mind, superconsciousness or infinite knowing. God Śiva knows in infinite, all-abiding, loving superconsciousness. Śiva knows from deep within all of His creations to their surface. His Being is within every animate and inanimate form. Should God Śiva remove His all-pervasive Parāśakti from any one or all of the three worlds, they would crumble, disintegrate and fade away. Śiva's Śakti is the sustaining power and presence throughout the universe. This unbounded force has neither beginning nor end. Verily, it is the Divine Mind of Lord Śiva. The *Vedas* say, "He is God, hidden in all beings, their inmost soul who is in all. He watches the works of creation, lives in all things, watches all things. He is pure consciousness, beyond the three conditions of nature." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Nature of the Primal Soul?

### ŚLOKA 19

Parameśvara is the uncreated, ever-existent Primal Soul, Śiva-Śakti, creator and supreme ruler of Mahādevas and beings of all three worlds. Abiding in His creation, our personal Lord rules from within, not from above. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Parameśvara, “Supreme Lord,” Mother of the universe, is the eternal, sovereign one, worshiped by all the Gods and sentient beings. So loved is Śiva-Śakti that all have an intimate relationship. So vast is His vastness, so over-powering is He that men cringe to transgress His will. So talked of is He that His name is on the lips of everyone—for He is the primal sound. Being the first and perfect form, God Śiva in this third perfection of His being—the Primal Soul, the manifest and personal Lord—naturally creates souls in His image and likeness. To love God is to know God. To know God is to feel His love for you. Such a compassionate God—a being, whose resplendent body may be seen in mystic vision—cares for the minutiae such as we and a universe such as ours. Many are the mystics who have seen the brilliant milk-white form of Śiva’s glowing body with its red-locked hair, graceful arms and legs, large hands, perfect face, loving eyes and musing smile. The *Āgamas* say, “Parameśvara is the cause of the five manifest aspects: emanation, *śṛiṣṭi*; preservation, *sthiti*; dissolution, *saṁhāra*; concealment, *tirobhāva*; and revelation, *anugraha*.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Are God Śiva's Traditional Forms?

### ŚLOKA 20

Our adoration of the one great God Śiva is directed toward diverse images and icons. Primary among them are Śivaliṅga, Naṭarāja, Ardhanārīśvara, Dakṣiṇāmūrti, Hari-Hara, Bhairava and the *triśūla*. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

Every form is a form of Śiva. Tradition has given us several of special sacredness. The Śivaliṅga was the first image of Divinity. After it all other icons evolved from mystic visions. We contemplate God Śiva as Paraśiva when we worship the Śivaliṅga. Its simple elliptical shape speaks silently of God's unspeakable Absolute Being. We exalt Śiva as Parāśakti or Satchidānanda, God's living omnipresence, when we worship any form of His never-separate Śakti, especially Ardhanārīśvara, whose right half is masculine and left half is feminine, and in whom all opposites are reconciled. We adore Him as Parameśvara, the Primal Soul, when we worship Naṭarāja, the Divine Dancer who animates the universe. Thus we worship Śiva's three perfections in three forms, yet knowing that He is a one Being, fully present in each of them. He is also Dakṣiṇāmūrti, the silent teacher; Hari-Hara—half-Śiva, half-Vishṇu—and Bhairava, the fierce wielder of *triśūla*, the trident of love, wisdom and action. The *Tirumantiram* declares, "Everywhere is the Holy Form. Everywhere is Śiva-Śakti. Everywhere is Chidambaram. Everywhere is Divine Dance." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

Gaṇeśa-Kārttikeyau  
गणेशकार्तिकेयौ



**Lords of Dharma**

In whose one limb all the Gods, three and  
thirty in number, are affixed, tell me of that  
Support—who may He be?

*Atharva Veda* 10.7.13. VE, 64

## Do Other Gods Exist Apart from Śiva?

### ŚLOKA 21

Supreme God Śiva has created all the Gods and given them distinct existence and powers, and yet He pervades them wholly. They are separate but inseparable. At the deepest level, nothing exists apart from Him. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

God Śiva is the Supreme Being, the Lord of lords. He alone prevails everywhere. Not an atom moves except by His will. Gaṇeśa, Kārttikeya, Indra, Agni and all the 330 million Gods of Hinduism are beings just as we are, created by Lord Śiva and destined to enjoy union with Him. The Gods are souls of high evolution. They are very old and mature souls, mighty beings who live in the Śivaloka. Though neither male nor female, they may be popularly depicted as Gods and Goddesses. The *devas* are benevolent beings of light abiding in the higher Antarloka. They help guide evolution from their world between births. The *asuras* are demonic beings of darkness, immature souls who temporarily inhabit Naraka, the lower Antarloka. *Devas* and *asuras* are usually subject to rebirth. We worship Śiva and the Gods. We neither worship the *devas* nor invoke the *asuras*. Kārttikeya, Gaṇeśa and all the Gods, *devas* and *asuras* worship Śiva. The *Vedas* explain, “From Him, also, are born the Gods, in manifold ways, the celestials, men, cattle, birds, the in-breath and the out-breath, rice and barley, austerity, faith, truth, chastity and the law.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.



## What Is the Nature of Lord Gaṇeśa?

### ŚLOKA 22

Lord Gaṇeśa is the elephant-faced Patron of Art and Science, the Lord of Obstacles and Guardian of Dharma. His will prevails as the force of righteousness, the embodiment of Śiva's *karmic* law in all three worlds. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Lord Śiva, the Almighty Power, created Heaven and Earth and the God Lord Gaṇeśa to oversee the intricate *karmas* and *dharma*s within the heavens and all the earths. Lord Gaṇeśa was created as a governor and interplanetary, intergalactic Lord. His knowledge is infinite, His judgment is just. It is none other than Lord Gaṇeśa and His mighty band of *gaṇas* who gently help souls out of the Naraka abyss and adjust them into higher consciousness after due penance has been paid, guiding them on the right path toward dharmic destiny. He is intricate of mind, loving pomp, delighting in all things sweet and enjoying adulation. Lord Śiva proclaimed that this son be worshiped first, even before Himself. Verily, He is the Lord of *Karma*. All Mahādevas, minor Gods, *devas* and sentient beings must worship Gaṇeśa before any responsible act could hope to be successful. Those who do not are subject to their own barriers. Yea, worship of Him sets the pattern of one's destiny. The *Tīrumanṭiram* says, "Five-armed is He, elephant-faced with tusks protruding, crescent-shaped, son of Śiva, wisdom's flower, in heart enshrined, His feet I praise." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is Lord Gaṇeśa's Special Duty?

ŚLOKA 23

As Lord of Obstacles, Gaṇeśa wields the noose and the goad, icons of His benevolent power of preventing or permitting events to happen in our life. Thus, we invoke His grace and wisdom before any worship or task. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Lord Gaṇeśa, the God of time and memory, strategically seated on the *mūlādhāra chakra*, poised between the higher and lower *chakras*, stabilizes all sentient beings. He holds the architect's plans of the divine masterpiece of universal past and future. Only good comes from Lord Gaṇeśa, who by taking the form of an elephant distinguishes Himself from other Gods. The *charyā pāda* begins with His worship. He staves off misfortune for those who perform penance in His name. He guides our *karma* from within us through the timing of events. Before any important undertaking, we supplicate Him to clear obstacles from the path, if it be His will. This Lord of Obstacles prevents us from hurting ourselves through living under an incomplete concept or making a request unneeded or beginning an endeavor not well thought out. Before we petition Him, He expects us to use all of our faculties to arrive at the decision He would have made. The *Āgamas* declare, "These Lords who, it is said, on the pure path, attend to the various duties deriving from a higher realm of *māyā* are at the prow of the effects of the higher realm of *māyā*." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Nature of Lord Kārttikeya?

### ŚLOKA 24

Lord Kārttikeya, Murugan, first *guru* and Pleiadean master of *kuṇḍalinī yoga*, was born of God Śiva's mind. His dynamic power awakens spiritual cognition to propel souls onward in their evolution to Śiva's feet. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Lord Kārttikeya flies through the mind's vast substance from planet to planet. He could well be called the Emancipator, ever available to the call of those in distress. Lord Kārttikeya, God of will, direct cognition and the purest, child-like divine love, propels us onward on the righteous way through religion, His Father's law. Majestically seated on the *maṇipūra chakra*, this scarlet-hued God blesses mankind and strengthens our will when we lift to the inner sky through *sādhana* and *yoga*. The *yoga pāda* begins with the worship of Him. The *yogī*, locked in meditation, venerates Kārttikeya, Skanda, as his mind becomes as calm as Śaravaṇa, the lake of Divine Essence. The *kuṇḍalinī* force within everyone is held and controlled by this powerful God, first among renunciates, dear to all *sannyāsins*. Revered as Murugan in the South, He is commander in chief of the great *devonic* army, a fine, dynamic soldier of the within, a fearless defender of righteousness. He is Divinity emulated in form. The *Vedas* say, "To such a one who has his stains wiped away, the venerable Sanatkumāra shows the further shore of darkness. Him they call Skanda." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Does Lord Kārttikeya's Vel Signify?

ŚLOKA 25

The lancelike vel wielded by Lord Kārttikeya, or Skanda, embodies discrimination and spiritual insight. Its blade is wide, long and keen, just as our knowledge must be broad, deep and penetrating. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

BHĀSHYA

The *śakti* power of the *vel*, the eminent, intricate power of righteousness over wrongdoing, conquers confusion within the realms below. The holy *vel*, that when thrown always hits its mark and of itself returns to Kārttikeya's mighty hand, rewards us when righteousness prevails and becomes the *kuṇḍalinī* serpent's unleashed power thwarting our every effort with punishing remorse when we transgress *dharma's* law. Thus, the holy *vel* is our release from ignorance into knowledge, our release from vanity into modesty, our release from sinfulness into purity through *tapas*. When we perform penance and beseech His blessing, this merciful God hurls His *vel* into the astral plane, piercing discordant sounds, colors and shapes, removing the mind's darkness. He is the King of kings, the power in their scepters. Standing behind the temporal majesty, He advises and authorizes. His *vel* empowering the ruler, justice prevails, wisdom enriches the minds of citizens, rain is abundant, crops flourish and plenty fills the larders. The *Tirumurai* says, "In the gloom of fear, His six-fold face gleams. In perils unbounded, His *vel* betokens, 'Fear not.'" Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

# Ātmasvarūpam आत्मस्वरूपम्



## The Nature of the Soul

A part of Infinite Consciousness becomes our own finite consciousness, with powers of discrimination and definition and with false conceptions. He is, in truth, Prajāpati and Viśva, the Source of Creation and the Universal in us all. This Spirit is consciousness and gives consciousness to the body. He is the driver of the chariot.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Maitrī Upanishad 2.5. UPM, 99*

## What Is Our Individual Soul Nature?

### ŚLOKA 26

Our individual soul is the immortal and spiritual body of light that animates life and reincarnates again and again until all necessary *karmas* are created and resolved and its essential unity with God is fully realized. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Our soul is God Śiva's emanational creation, the source of all our higher functions, including knowledge, will and love. Our soul is neither male nor female. It is that which never dies, even when its four outer sheaths—physical, *prāṇic*, instinctive and mental—change form and perish as they naturally do. The physical body is the *annamaya kośa*. The *prāṇic* sheath of vitality is the *prāṇamaya kośa*. The instinctive-intellectual sheath is the *manomaya kośa*. The mental, or cognitive, sheath is the *vijñānamaya kośa*. The inmost soul body is the blissful, ever-giving-wisdom *ānandamaya kośa*. Parāśakti is the soul's superconscious mind—God Śiva's mind. Paraśiva is the soul's inmost core. We are not the physical body, mind or emotions. We are the immortal soul, *ātman*. The sum of our true existence is *ānandamaya kośa* and its essence, Parāśakti and Paraśiva. The *Vedas* expostulate, "The soul is born and unfolds in a body, with dreams and desires and the food of life. And then it is reborn in new bodies, in accordance with its former works. The quality of the soul determines its future body; earthly or airy, heavy or light." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## How Is Our Soul Different from Śiva?

ŚLOKA 27

Our soul body was created in the image and likeness of the Primal Soul, God Śiva, but it differs from the Primal Soul in that it is immature. While Śiva is unevolutionary perfection, we are in the process of evolving. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

To understand the mysteries of the soul, we distinguish between the soul body and its essence. As a soul body, we are individual and unique, different from all others, a self-effulgent being of light which evolves and matures through an evolutionary process. This soul body is of the nature of God Śiva, but is different from Śiva in that it is less resplendent than the Primal Soul and still evolving, while God is unevolutionary perfection. We may liken the soul body to an acorn, which contains the mighty oak tree but is a small seed yet to develop. The soul body matures through experience, evolving through many lives into the splendor of God Śiva, ultimately realizing Śiva totally in *nirvikalpa samādhi*. Even after Self Realization is attained, the soul body continues to evolve in this and other worlds until it merges with the Primal Soul, as a drop of water merges with its source, the ocean. Yea, this is the destiny of all souls without exception. The *Vedas* say, “As oil in sesame seeds, as butter in cream, as water in river beds, as fire in friction sticks, so is the *ātman* grasped in one’s own self when one searches for Him with truthfulness and austerity.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## How Is Our Soul Identical with Śiva?

### ŚLOKA 28

The essence of our soul, which was never created, is immanent love and transcendent reality and is identical and eternally one with God Śiva. At the core of our being, we already are That—perfect at this very moment. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

At the core of the subtle soul body is Parāśakti, or Satchid-ānanda, immanent love; and at the core of that is Paraśiva, transcendent reality. At this depth of our being there exists no separate identity or difference—all are One. Thus, deep within our soul we are identical with God now and forever. These two divine perfections are not aspects of the evolving soul, but the nucleus of the soul which does not change or evolve. From an absolute perspective, our soul is already in nondual union with God, but to be realized to be known. We are That. We do not become That. Deep within this physical body, with its turbulent emotions and getting-educated mind, is pure perfection identical to Śiva's own perfections of Parāśakti and Paraśiva. In this sacred mystery we find the paradoxes of oneness and twoness, of being and becoming, of created and uncreated existence subtly delineated. Yea, in the depth of our being, we are as He is. The *Vedas* explain, "The one controller, the inner Self of all things, who makes His one form manifold, to the wise who perceive Him as abiding in the soul, to them is eternal bliss—to no others." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.



## Why Are We Not Omniscient Like Śiva?

ŚLOKA 29

The three bonds of *āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā* veil our sight. This is Śiva's purposeful limiting of awareness which allows us to evolve. In the superconscious depths of our soul, we share God Śiva's all-knowingness. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Just as children are kept from knowing all about adult life until they have matured into understanding, so too is the soul's knowledge limited. We learn what we need to know, and we understand what we have experienced. Only this narrowing of our awareness, coupled with a sense of individualized ego, allows us to look upon the world and our part in it from a practical, human point of view. *Pāśa* is the soul's triple bondage: *māyā*, *karma* and *āṇava*. Without the world of *māyā*, the soul could not evolve through experience. *Karma* is the law of cause and effect, action and reaction governing *māyā*. *Āṇava* is the individuating veil of duality, source of ignorance and finitude. *Māyā* is the classroom, *karma* the teacher, and *āṇava* the student's ignorance. The three bonds, or *malas*, are given by Lord Śiva to help and protect us as we unfold. Yet, God Śiva's all-knowingness may be experienced for brief periods by the meditator who turns within to his own essence. The *Tirumantiram* explains, "When the soul attains Self-knowledge, then it becomes one with Śiva. The *malas* perish, birth's cycle ends and the lustrous light of wisdom dawns." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## How Do Hindus Understand Moksha?

### ŚLOKA 30

The destiny of all souls is *moksha*, liberation from rebirth on the physical plane. Our soul then continues evolving in the Antarloka and Śivaloka, and finally merges with Śiva like water returning to the sea. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

*Moksha* comes when earthly *karma* has been resolved, *dharma* well performed and God fully realized. Each soul must have performed well through many lives the *varṇa dharmas*, or four castes, and lived through life's varied experiences in order to not be pulled back to physical birth by a deed left undone. All souls are destined to achieve *moksha*, but not necessarily in this life. Hindus know this and do not delude themselves that this life is the last. While seeking and attaining profound realizations, they know there is much to be done in fulfilling life's other goals (*purushārthas*): *dharma*, righteousness; *artha*, wealth; and *kāma*, pleasure. Old souls renounce worldly ambitions and take up *sannyāsa* in quest of Paraśiva, even at a young age. Toward life's end, all Hindus strive for Self Realization, the gateway to liberation. After *moksha*, subtle *karmas* are made in inner realms and swiftly resolved, like writing on water. At the end of each soul's evolution comes *viśvagrāsa*, total absorption in Śiva. The *Vedas* say, "If here one is able to realize Him before the death of the body, he will be liberated from the bondage of the world." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Samsārah संसारः



## Karma and Rebirth

Through the ripening of the fruits of his actions he does not attain any rest, like a worm caught within a whirlpool. The desire for liberation arises in human beings at the end of many births, through the ripening of their past virtuous conduct.

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Paingala Upanishad 2.11. UPR, 913*

## How Do Hindus Understand Karma?

ŚLOKA 31

*Karma* literally means “deed” or “act” and more broadly names the universal principle of cause and effect, action and reaction which governs all life. *Karma* is a natural law of the mind, just as gravity is a law of matter. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

*Karma* is not fate, for man acts with free will, creating his own destiny. The *Vedas* tell us, if we sow goodness, we will reap goodness; if we sow evil, we will reap evil. *Karma* refers to the totality of our actions and their concomitant reactions in this and previous lives, all of which determines our future. It is the interplay between our experience and how we respond to it that makes *karma* devastating or helpfully invigorating. The conquest of *karma* lies in intelligent action and dispassionate reaction. Not all *karmas* rebound immediately. Some accumulate and return unexpectedly in this or other births. The several kinds of *karma* are: personal, family, community, national, global and universal. Ancient *rishis* perceived personal *karma*’s three-fold edict. The first is *sañchita*, the sum total of past *karmas* yet to be resolved. The second is *prārabdha*, that portion of *sañchita* to be experienced in this life. *Kriyamāna*, the third type, is *karma* we are currently creating. The *Vedas* propound, “Here they say that a person consists of desires. And as is his desire, so is his will. As is his will, so is his deed. Whatever deed he does, that he will reap.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Is There Good Karma and Bad Karma?

### ŚLOKA 32

In the highest sense, there is no good or bad *karma*. All experience offers opportunities for spiritual growth. Selfless acts yield positive, uplifting conditions. Selfish acts yield conditions of negativity and confusion. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

*Karma* itself is neither good nor bad but a neutral principle that governs energy and motion of thought, word and deed. All experience helps us grow. Good, loving actions bring to us lovingness through others. Mean, selfish acts bring back to us pain and suffering. Kindness produces sweet fruits, called *punya*. Unkindness yields spoiled fruits, called *pāpa*. As we mature, life after life, we go through much pain and joy. Actions that are in tune with *dharma* help us along the path, while *adharmic* actions impede our progress. The divine law is: whatever *karma* we are experiencing in our life is just what we need at the moment, and nothing can happen but that we have the strength to meet it. Even harsh *karma*, when faced in wisdom, can be the greatest catalyst for spiritual unfoldment. Performing daily *sādhana*, keeping good company, pilgrimaging to holy places, seeing to others' needs—these evoke the higher energies, direct the mind to useful thoughts and avoid the creation of troublesome new *karmas*. The *Vedas* explain, “According as one acts, so does he become. One becomes virtuous by virtuous action, bad by bad action.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Process of Reincarnation?

### ŚLOKA 33

Reincarnation, *punarjanma*, is the natural process of birth, death and rebirth. At death we drop off the physical body and continue evolving in the inner worlds in our subtle bodies, until we again enter into birth. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Through the ages, reincarnation has been the great consoling element within Hinduism, eliminating the fear of death, explaining why one person is born a genius and another an idiot. We are not the body in which we live but the immortal soul which inhabits many bodies in its evolutionary journey through *sarīrāsāra*. After death, we continue to exist in unseen worlds, enjoying or suffering the harvest of earthly deeds until it comes time for yet another physical birth. Because certain *karmas* can be resolved only in the physical world, we must enter another physical body to continue our evolution. After soaring into the causal plane, we enter a new womb. Subsequently the old *manomaya kośa* is slowly sloughed off and a new one created. The actions set in motion in previous lives form the tendencies and conditions of the next. Reincarnation ceases when *karma* is resolved, God is realized and *moksha* attained. The *Vedas* say, “After death, the soul goes to the next world bearing in mind the subtle impressions of its deeds, and after reaping their harvest returns again to this world of action. Thus, he who has desires continues subject to rebirth.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## How Should We View Death and Dying?

ŚLOKA 34

Our soul never dies; only the physical body dies. We neither fear death nor look forward to it, but revere it as a most exalted experience. Life, death and the afterlife are all part of our path to perfect oneness with God. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

For Hindus, death is nobly referred to as *mahāprasthāna*, “the great journey.” When the lessons of this life have been learned and *karmas* reach a point of intensity, the soul leaves the physical body, which then returns its elements to the earth. The awareness, will, memory and intelligence which we think of as ourselves continue to exist in the soul body. Death is a most natural experience, not to be feared. It is a quick transition from the physical world to the astral plane, like walking through a door, leaving one room and entering another. Knowing this, we approach death as a *sādhana*, as a spiritual opportunity, bringing a level of detachment which is difficult to achieve in the tumult of life and an urgency to strive more than ever in our search for the Divine Self. To be near a realized soul at the time he or she gives up the body yields blessings surpassing those of a thousand and eight visits to holy persons at other times. The *Vedas* explain, “As a caterpillar coming to the end of a blade of grass draws itself together in taking the next step, so does the soul in the process of transition strike down this body and dispel its ignorance.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## How Does One Best Prepare for Death?

### ŚLOKA 35

Blessed with the knowledge of impending transition, we settle affairs and take refuge in *japa*, worship, scripture and *yoga*—seeking the highest realizations as we consciously, joyously release the world. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

Before dying, Hindus diligently fulfill obligations, make amends and resolve differences by forgiving themselves and others, lest unresolved *karmas* bear fruit in future births. That done, we turn to God through meditation, surrender and scriptural study. As a conscious death is our ideal, we avoid drugs, artificial life-extension and suicide. Suicide only postpones and intensifies the *karma* one seeks escape from, requiring several lives to return to the evolutionary point that existed at the moment of suicide. In cases of terminal illness, under strict community regulation, tradition does allow *prāyopaveśa*, self-willed religious death by fasting. When nearing transition, if hospitalized, we return home to be among loved ones. In the final hours of life, we seek the Self God within and focus on our *mantra* as kindred keep prayerful vigil. At death, we leave the body through the crown *chakra*, entering the clear white light and beyond in quest of *videhamukti*. The *Vedas* affirm, “When a person comes to weakness, be it through old age or disease, he frees himself from these limbs just as a mango, a fig or a berry releases itself from its stalk.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.



## San Mārgah सन्मार्गः



## The Way to Liberation

When the nets of dispositions good and bad are dissolved without any residue, when the accumulated deeds virtuous and vicious are completely destroyed to the very roots, the past and the future alike, owing to the removal of all impediments, bring about the direct and immediate perception of Brahman as of the āmalaka fruit on the palm of the hand, then the knower of Brahman becomes one liberated while in life.

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Paingala Upanishad 3.2. UPR, 916*

## What Are the Four Stages on the Path?

### ŚLOKA 36

The path of enlightenment is divided naturally into four stages: *charyā*, virtue and selfless service; *kriyā*, worshipful *sādhana*s; *yoga*, meditation under a *guru*'s guidance; and *jñāna*, the wisdom state of the realized soul. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

*Charyā*, *kriyā*, *yoga* and *jñāna* are the sequence of the soul's evolutionary process, much like the natural development of a butterfly from egg to caterpillar, from caterpillar to pupa, and then the final metamorphosis to butterfly. These are four *pādas*, or stages, through which each human soul must pass in many births to attain its final goal. Before entering these spiritual stages, the soul is immersed in the lower nature, the *āṇava mārگا*, or self-centered path, bound in fear and lust, hurtful rage, jealousy, confusion, selfishness, consciencelessness and malice. Then it awakens into *charyā*, unselfish religious service, or *karma yoga*. Once matured in *charyā*, it enters *kriyā*, devotion or *bhakti yoga*, and finally blossoms into *kuṇḍalinī yoga*. *Jñāna* is the state of enlightened wisdom reached toward the path's end as a result of Self Realization. The four *pādas* are not alternative ways, but progressive, cumulative phases of a one path, San Mārگا. The *Tirumantiram* says, "Being the Life of life is splendrous *jñāna* worship. Beholding the Light of life is great *yoga* worship. Giving life by invocation is external worship. Expressing adoration is *charyā*." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Nature of the Charyā Pāda?

ŚLOKA 37

*Charyā* is the performance of altruistic religious service and living according to traditional ethical conduct and culture, by which the outer nature is purified. It is the stage of overcoming basic instinctive patterns. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

*Charyā*, literally “conduct,” is the first stage of religiousness and the foundation for the next three stages. It is also called the *dāsa mārṅa*, meaning “path of servitude,” for here the soul relates to God as servant to master. The disciplines of *charyā* include humble service, attending the temple, performing one’s duty to community and family, honoring holy men, respecting elders, atoning for misdeeds and fulfilling the ten classical restraints called *yamas*. Within a strong society, one performs *charyā* whether he wants to or not. Young or rebellious souls often resist and resent, whereas mature souls fulfill these obligations most naturally. Right behavior and self-sacrificing service are never outgrown. The keynote of *charyā*, or *karma yoga*, is *sevā*, religious service given without the least thought of reward, which has the magical effect of softening the ego and bringing forth the soul’s innate devotion. The *Tirumantiram* explains, “The simple temple duties, lighting the lamps, picking flowers, lovingly polishing the floors, sweeping, singing the Lord’s praise, ringing the bell and fetching ceremonial water—these constitute the *dāsa mārṅa*.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Nature of the Kriyā Pāda?

ŚLOKA 38

*Kriyā* is joyous and regular worship, both internal and external, in the home and temple. It includes *pūjā*, *japa*, penance, fasting and scriptural learning, by which our understanding and love of God and Gods deepen. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Hinduism demands deep devotion through *bhakti yoga* in the *kriyā pāda*, softening the intellect and unfolding love. In *kriyā*, the second stage of religiousness, our *sādhana*, which was mostly external in *charyā*, is now also internal. *Kriyā*, literally “action or rite,” is a stirring of the soul in awareness of the Divine, overcoming the obstinacy of the instinctive-intellectual mind. We now look upon the Deity image not just as carved stone, but as the living presence of the God. We perform ritual and *pūjā* not because we have to but because we want to. We are drawn to the temple to satisfy our longing. We sing joyfully. We absorb and intuit the wisdom of the *Vedas* and *Āgamas*. We perform pilgrimage and fulfill the sacraments. We practice diligently the ten classical observances called *niyamas*. Our relationship with God in *kriyā* is as a son to his parents and thus this stage is called the *satputra mārga*. The *Tirumantiram* instructs, “*Pūjā*, reading the scriptures, singing hymns, performing *japa* and unsullied austerity, truthfulness, restraint of envy, and offering of food—these and other self-purifying acts constitute the flawless *satputra mārga*.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Nature of the Yoga Pāda?

ŚLOKA 39

*Yoga* is internalized worship which leads to union with God. It is the regular practice of meditation, detachment and austerities under the guidance of a *satguru* through whose grace we attain the realization of Paraśiva. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

*Yoga*, “union,” is the process of uniting with God within oneself, a stage arrived at through perfecting *charyā* and *kriyā*. As God is now like a friend to us, *yoga* is known as the *sakhā mārga*. This system of inner discovery begins with *āsana*—sitting quietly in *yogic* posture—and *prāṇāyāma*, breath control. *Pratyāhāra*, sense withdrawal, brings awareness into *dhāraṇā*, concentration, then into *dhyāna*, meditation. Over the years, under ideal conditions, the *kuṇḍalinī* fire of consciousness ascends to the higher *chakras*, burning the dross of ignorance and past *karmas*. *Dhyāna* finally leads to ecstasy—first to *savikalpa samādhi*, the contemplative experience of Satchidānanda, and ultimately to *nirvikalpa samādhi*, Paraśiva. Truly a living *satguru* is needed as a steady guide to traverse this path. When *yoga* is practiced by one perfected in *kriyā*, the Gods receive the *yogī* into their midst through his awakened, fiery *kuṇḍalinī*. The *Vedas* enjoin the *yogī*, “With earnest effort hold the senses in check. Controlling the breath, regulate the vital activities. As a charioteer holds back his restive horses, so does a persevering aspirant restrain his mind.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Nature of the Jñāna Pāda?

ŚLOKA 40.

*Jñāna* is divine wisdom emanating from an enlightened being, a soul in its maturity, immersed in Śivaness, the blessed realization of God, while living out earthly *karma*. *Jñāna* is the fruition of *yoga tapas*. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

BHĀSHYA

The instinctive mind in the young soul is firm and well-knit together. The intellectual mind in the adolescent soul is complicated, and he sees the physical world as his only reality. The subsuperconscious mind in the mystically inclined soul well perfected in *kriyā* longs for realization of Śiva's two perfections, Satchidānanda and Paraśiva. Through *yoga* he bursts into the superconscious mind, experiencing bliss, all-knowingness and perfect silence. It is when the *yogi's* intellect is shattered that he soars into Paraśiva and comes out a *jñānī*. Each time he enters that unspeakable *nirvikalpa samādhi*, he returns to consciousness more and more the knower. He is the liberated one, the *jīvanmukta*, the epitome of *kaivalya*—perfect freedom—far-seeing, filled with light, filled with love. One does not become a *jñānī* simply by reading and understanding philosophy. The state of *jñāna* lies in the realm of intuition, beyond the intellect. The *Vedas* say, "Having realized the Self, the *ṛishis*, perfected souls, satisfied with their knowledge, passion-free, tranquil—those wise beings, having attained the omnipresent on all sides—enter into the All itself." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Trilokām त्रिलोकम्



### The Three Worlds

The spirit of man has two dwellings: this world and the world beyond. There is also a third dwelling place: the land of sleep and dreams. Resting in this borderland, the spirit of man can behold his dwelling in this world and in the other world afar; and wandering in this borderland, he beholds behind him the sorrows of this world, and in front of him he sees the joys of the beyond.

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 4.3.9. UPM, 134*

## Where Did This Universe Come from?

ŚLOKA 41

Supreme God Śiva created the world and all things in it. He creates and sustains from moment to moment every atom of the seen physical and unseen spiritual universe. Everything is within Him. He is within everything. Aum.

BHĀSHYA:

God Śiva created us. He created the Earth and all things upon it, animate and inanimate. He created time and gravity, the vast spaces and the uncounted stars. He created night and day, joy and sorrow, love and hate, birth and death. He created the gross and the subtle, this world and the other worlds. There are three worlds of existence: the physical, subtle and causal, termed Bhūloka, Antarloka and Śivaloka. The Creator of all, Śiva Himself is uncreated. As supreme Mahādeva, Śiva wills into manifestation all souls and all form, issuing them from Himself like light from a fire or waves from an ocean. *Ṛishis* describe this perpetual process as the unfoldment of thirty-six *tattvas*, stages of manifestation, from the Śiva *tattva*—Parāśakti and *nāda*—to the five elements. Creation is not the making of a separate thing, but an emanation of Himself. Lord Śiva creates, constantly sustains the form of His creations and absorbs them back into Himself. The *Vedas* elucidate, “As a spider spins and withdraws its web, as herbs grow on the earth, as hair grows on the head and body of a person, so also from the Imperishable arises this universe.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.



## What Is the Nature of the Physical Plane?

ŚLOKA 42

The physical plane, or Bhūloka, is the world of gross or material substance in which phenomena are perceived by the five senses. It is the most limited of worlds, the least permanent and the most subject to change. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

The material world is where we have our experiences, manufacture *karma* and fulfill the desires and duties of life in a physical body. It is in the Bhūloka that consciousness is limited, that awareness of the other two worlds is not always remembered. It is the external plane, made of gross matter, which is really just energy. The world is remarkable in its unending variety and enthralling novelty. Mystics call it the unfoldment of *prakṛiti*, primal nature, and liken it to a bubble on the ocean's surface. It arises, lives and bursts to return to the source. This physical world, though necessary to our evolution, is the embodiment of impermanence, of constant change. Thus, we take care not to become overly attached to it. It is mystically subjective, not objective. It is dense but not solid. It is sentient, even sacred. It is rocks and rainbows, liquid, gas and conflagration, all held in a setting of space. The *Vedas* affirm, "The knower, the author of time, the possessor of qualities and all knowledge, it is He who envelopes the universe. Controlled by Him, this work of creation unfolds itself—that which is regarded as earth, water, fire, air and ether." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Nature of the Subtle Plane?

ŚLOKA 43

The subtle plane, or Antarloka, is the mental-emotional sphere that we function in through thought and feeling and reside in fully during sleep and after death. It is the astral world that exists within the physical plane. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

The astral plane is for the most part exactly duplicated in the physical plane, though it is of a more intense rate of vibration. Beings in the higher Antarloka are trained in technology, the arts and increments of culture to take up bodies in the Bhūloka, to improve and enhance conditions within it. It is in this more advanced realm that new inventions are invented, new species created, ideas unfolded, futures envisioned, environments balanced, scientists trained and artists taught finesse. We function constantly, though perhaps not consciously, in this subtle plane by our every thought and emotion. Here, during sleep and after death, we meet others who are sleeping or who have died. We attend inner-plane schools, there to advance our knowledge. The Antarloka spans the spectrum of consciousness from the hellish Naraka regions beginning at the *pātāla chakra* within the feet, to the heavenly realm of divine love in the *viśuddha chakra* within the throat. The *Vedas* recount, “Now, there are, of a truth, three worlds: the world of men, the world of the fathers, and the world of the Gods. The world of the Gods is verily the best of worlds.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Nature of the Causal Plane?

### ŚLOKA 44

The causal plane, or Śivaloka, pulsates at the core of being, deep within the subtle plane. It is the superconscious world where the Gods and highly evolved souls live and can be accessed through *yoga* and temple worship. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

The causal plane is the world of light and blessedness, the highest of heavenly regions, extolled in the scriptures of all faiths. It is the foundation of existence, the source of visions, the point of conception, the apex of creation. The causal plane is the abode of Lord Śiva and His entourage of Mahādevas and other highly evolved souls who exist in their own self-effulgent form—radiant bodies of centillions of quantum light particles. Even for embodied souls, this refined realm is not distant, but exists within man. It is ever-present, ever-available as the clear white light that illumines the mind, accessed within the throat and cranial *chakras*—*viśuddha*, *ājñā* and *sahasrāra*—in the sublime practices of *yoga* and temple worship. It is in the causal plane that the mature soul, unshrouded of the physical body's strong instinctive pulls and astral body's harsh intellectual stranglehold, resides fully conscious in its self-effulgent form. The Śivaloka is the natural refuge of all souls. The *Vedas* intone, "Where men move at will, in the threefold sphere, in the third heaven of heavens, where are realms full of light, in that radiant world make me immortal." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Does the Universe Ever End? Is It Real?

### ŚLOKA 45

The universe ends at *mahāpralaya*, when time, form and space dissolve in God Śiva, only to be created again in the next cosmic cycle. We call it relatively real to distinguish it from the unchanging Reality. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

This universe, and indeed all of existence, is *māyā*, Śiva's mirific energy. While God is absolutely real, His emanated world is relatively real. Being relatively real does not mean the universe is illusory or nonexistent, but that it is impermanent and subject to change. It is an error to say that the universe is mere illusion, for it is entirely real when experienced in ordinary consciousness, and its existence is required to lead us to God. The universe is born, evolves and dissolves in cycles much as the seasons come and go through the year. These cycles are inconceivably immense, ending in *mahāpralaya* when the universe undergoes dissolution. All three worlds, including time and space, dissolve in God Śiva. This is His ultimate grace—the evolution of all souls is perfect and complete as they lose individuality and return to Him. Then God Śiva exists alone in His three perfections until He again issues forth creation. The *Vedas* state, “Truly, God is One; there can be no second. He alone governs these worlds with His powers. He stands facing beings. He, the herdsman, after bringing forth all worlds, reabsorbs them at the end of time.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Sarvabhadrah सर्वभद्रः



## The Goodness of All

In him who is pure of mind, intellect and ego, the senses and their perceptions are pure, in fact, and he finds everything pure as well.

*Sarvajñānottara Āgama, Ātma Sakshatkara 62. RM, 110*

## Are Souls and World Essentially Good?

ŚLOKA 46

The intrinsic and real nature of all beings is their soul, which is goodness. The world, too, is God's flawless creation. All is in perfect balance. There are changes, and they may appear evil, but there is no intrinsic evil. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

The soul radiates love, is a child of God going through its evolutionary process of growing up into the image and likeness of the Lord. Goodness and mercy, compassion and caring are the intrinsic, inherent or indwelling nature of the soul. Wisdom and pure knowledge, happiness and joy are the intrinsic nature of the soul. Can we believe the soul is anything but goodness itself, purity and all the refined qualities found within superconsciousness? When God is everywhere, how can there be a place for evil? The soul is constantly one with God in its ever-present Satchidānanda state at every point in its evolution. How, then, arises the concept of evil and suffering? *Āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā*, the play toys of the soul, are the source of this seeming suffering. Like a child, we play with the toys of *āṇava* in the playground of *māyā*, fall and are bruised by *karma*, then run to our loving Lord for solace and release into spiritual maturity. The *Vedas* pointedly state, "As the sun, the eye of the whole world, is not sullied by the external faults of the eyes, so the one inner soul of all things is not sullied by the sorrow in the world, being external to it." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Why Do Some Souls Act in Evil Ways?

ŚLOKA 47

People act in evil ways who have lost touch with their soul nature and live totally in the outer, instinctive mind. What the ignorant see as evil, the enlightened see as the actions of low-minded and immature individuals. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Evil is often looked upon as a force against God. But the Hindu knows that all forces are God's forces, even the waywardness of *adharma*. This is sometimes difficult to understand when we see the pains and problems caused by men against men. Looking deeper, we see that what is called evil has its own mysterious purpose in life. Yes, bad things do happen. Still, the wise never blame God, for they know these to be the return of man's self-created *karmas*, difficult but necessary experiences for his spiritual evolution. Whenever we are injured or hurt, we understand that our suffering is but the fulfillment of a *karma* we once initiated, for which our injurer is but the instrument who, when his *karma* cycles around, will be the injured. Those who perform seemingly evil deeds are not yet in touch with the ever-present God consciousness of their immortal soul. The *Vedas* rightly admonish, "Borne along and defiled by the stream of qualities, unsteady, wavering, bewildered, full of desire, distracted, one goes on into the state of self-conceit. In thinking, 'This is I' and 'That is mine' one binds himself with himself, as does a bird with a snare." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Source of Good and Evil?

ŚLOKA 48

Instead of seeing good and evil in the world, we understand the nature of the embodied soul in three inter-related parts: instinctive or physical-emotional; intellectual or mental; and superconscious or spiritual. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Evil has no source, unless the source of evil's seeming be ignorance itself. Still, it is good to fear unrighteousness. The ignorant complain, justify, fear and criticize "sinful deeds," setting themselves apart as lofty puritans. When the outer, or lower, instinctive nature dominates, one is prone to anger, fear, greed, jealousy, hatred and backbiting. When the intellect is prominent, arrogance and analytical thinking preside. When the superconscious soul comes forth the refined qualities are born—compassion, insight, modesty and the others. The animal instincts of the young soul are strong. The intellect, yet to be developed, is nonexistent to control these strong instinctive impulses. When the intellect is developed, the instinctive nature subsides. When the soul unfolds and overshadows the well-developed intellect, this mental harness is loosened and removed. When we encounter wickedness in others, let us be compassionate, for truly there is no intrinsic evil. The *Vedas* say, "Mind is indeed the source of bondage and also the source of liberation. To be bound to things of this world: this is bondage. To be free from them: this is liberation." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.



## How Can a Benevolent God Permit Evil?

### ŚLOKA 49

Ultimately, there is no good or bad. God did not create evil as a force distinct from good. He granted to souls the loving edicts of *dharma* and experiential choices from very subtle to most crude, thus to learn and evolve. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

From the pinnacle of consciousness, one sees the harmony of life. Similarly, from a mountaintop, we see the natural role of a raging ocean and the steep cliffs below—they are beautiful. From the bottom of the mountain, the ocean can appear ominous and the cliffs treacherous. When through meditation, we view the universe from the inside out, we see that there is not one thing out of place or wrong. This releases the human concepts of right and wrong, good and bad. Our benevolent Lord created everything in perfect balance. Good or evil, kindness or hurtfulness return to us as the result, the fruit, of our own actions of the past. The four *dharma*s are God's wisdom lighting our path. That which is known as evil arises from the instinctive-intellectual nature, which the Lord created as dimensions of experience to strengthen our soul and further its spiritual evolution. Let us be compassionate, for truly there is no intrinsic evil. The *Vedas* admonish, "Being overcome by the fruits of his action, he enters a good or an evil womb, so that his course is downward or upward, and he wanders around, overcome by the pairs of opposites." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Should One Avoid Worldly Involvement?

### ŚLOKA 50

The world is the bountiful creation of a benevolent God, who means for us to live positively in it, facing *karma* and fulfilling *dharma*. We must not despise or fear the world. Life is meant to be lived joyously. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

The world is the place where our destiny is shaped, our desires fulfilled and our soul matured. In the world, we grow from ignorance into wisdom, from darkness into light and from a consciousness of death to immortality. The whole world is an *āśrama* in which all are doing *sādhana*. We must love the world, which is God's creation. Those who despise, hate and fear the world do not understand the intrinsic goodness of all. The world is a glorious place, not to be feared. It is a gracious gift from Śiva Himself, a playground for His children in which to interrelate young souls with the old—the young experiencing their *karma* while the old hold firmly to their *dharma*. The young grow; the old know. Not fearing the world does not give us permission to become immersed in worldliness. To the contrary, it means remaining affectionately detached, like a drop of water on a lotus leaf, being in the world but not of it, walking in the rain without getting wet. The *Vedas* warn, “Behold the universe in the glory of God: and all that lives and moves on Earth. Leaving the transient, find joy in the Eternal. Set not your heart on another's possession.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Pāpa-Duḥkhe पापदुःखे



## Sin and Suffering

Loose us from the yoke of the sins of our Fathers  
and also of those we ourselves have committed.  
Release your servant, as a thief is set free from his  
crime or as a calf is loosed from its cord.

*Rig Veda* 7.86.5 VE, 516

## Why Is There Suffering in the World?

### ŚLOKA 51

The nature of the world is duality. It contains each thing and its opposite: joy and sorrow, goodness and evil, love and hate. Through experience of these, we learn and evolve, finally seeking Truth beyond all opposites. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

There is a divine purpose even in the existence of suffering in the world. Suffering cannot be totally avoided. It is a natural part of human life and the impetus for much spiritual growth for the soul. Knowing this, the wise accept suffering from any source, be it hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, famine, wars, disease or inexplicable tragedies. Just as the intense fire of the furnace purifies gold, so does suffering purify the soul to resplendence. So also does suffering offer us the important realization that true happiness and freedom cannot be found in the world, for earthly joy is inextricably bound to sorrow, and worldly freedom to bondage. Having learned this, devotees seek a *satguru* who teaches them to understand suffering, and brings them into the intentional hardships of *sādhana* and *tapas* leading to liberation from the cycles of experience in the realm of duality. The *Āgamas* explain, “That which appears as cold or as hot, fresh or spoiled, good fortune and bad, love and hate, effort and laziness, the exalted and the depraved, the rich and the poor, the well-founded and the ill-founded, all this is God Himself; none other than Him can we know.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is Sin? How Can We Atone for It?

ŚLOKA 52

Sin is the intentional transgression of divine law. There is no inherent or “original” sin. Neither is there mortal sin by which the soul is forever lost. Through *sādhana*, worship and austerities, sins can be atoned for. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

What men term sin, the wise call ignorance. Man’s true nature is not sullied by sin. Sin is related only to the lower, instinctive-intellectual nature as a transgression of *dharma*. Still, sin is real and to be avoided, for our wrongful actions return to us as sorrow through the law of *karma*. Sin is terminable, and its effects may be compensated for by penance, or *prāyaścitta*, and good deeds which settle the *karmic* debt. The young soul, less in tune with his soul nature, is inclined toward sin; the old soul seldom transgresses divine law. Sins are the crippling distortions of intellect bound in emotion. When we sin, we take the energy and distort it to our instinctive favor. When we are unjust and mean, hateful and holding resentments year after year and no one but ourselves knows of our intrigue and corruption, we suffer. As the soul evolves, it eventually feels the great burden of faults and misdeeds and wishes to atone. Penance is performed, and the soul seeks absolution from society and beseeches God’s exonerating grace. The *Vedas* say, “Loose me from my sin as from a bond that binds me. May my life swell the stream of your river of Right.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Does Hell Really Exist? Is There a Satan?

ŚLOKA 53

There is no eternal hell, nor is there a Satan. However, there are hellish states of mind and woeful births for those who think and act wrongfully—temporary tormenting conditions that lift the fiery forces within. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Hell, termed Naraka, is the lower astral realm of the seven *chakras* below the *mūlādhāra*. It is a place of fire and heat, anguish and dismay, of confusion, despair and depression. Here anger, jealousy, argument, mental conflict and tormenting moods plague the mind. Access to hell is brought about by our own thoughts, words, deeds and emotions—suppressed, antagonistic feelings that court demons and their aggressive forces. Hell is not eternal. Nor is there a Satan who tempts man and opposes God's power, though there are devilish beings called *asuras*, immature souls caught in the abyss of deception and hurtfulness. We do not have to die to suffer the Naraka regions, for hellish states of mind are also experienced in the physical world. If we do die in a hellish state of consciousness—burdened by unresolved hatred, remorse, resentment, fear and distorted patterns of thought—we arrive in Naraka fully equipped to join others in this temporary astral purgatory. The *Vedas* say, "Sunless and demonic, verily, are those worlds, and enveloped in blinding darkness, to which all those people who are enemies of their own souls go after death." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Consequence of Sinful Acts?

ŚLOKA 54

When we do not think, speak and act virtuously, we create negative *karmas* and bring suffering upon ourselves and others. We suffer when we act instinctively and intellectually without superconscious guidance. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

We are happy, serene and stable when we follow good conduct, when we listen to our conscience, the knowing voice of the soul. The superconscious mind, the mind of our soul, knows and inspires good conduct, out of which comes a refined, sustainable culture. Wrongdoing and vice lead us away from God, deep into the darkness of doubt, despair and self-condemnation. This brings the *asuras* around us. We are out of harmony with ourselves and our family and must seek companionship elsewhere, amongst those who are also crude, unmindful, greedy and lacking in self-control. In this bad company, burdensome new *karma* is created, as good conduct cannot be followed. This *pāpa* accumulates, blinding us to the religious life we once lived. Penance and throwing ourselves upon the mercy of God and the Gods are the only release for the unvirtuous, those who conduct themselves poorly. Fortunately, our Gods are compassionate and love their devotees. The ancient *Vedas* elucidate, “The mind is said to be twofold: the pure and also the impure; impure by union with desire—pure when from desire completely free!” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Does God Ever Punish Wrongdoers?

ŚLOKA 55

God is perfect goodness, love and truth. He is not wrathful or vengeful. He does not condemn or punish wrongdoers. Jealousy, vengefulness and vanity are qualities of man's instinctive nature, not of God. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

BHĀSHYA

There is no reason to ever fear God, whose right-hand gesture, *abhaya mudrā*, indicates “fear not,” and whose left hand invites approach. God is with us always, even when we are unaware of that holy presence. He is His creation. It is an extension of Himself; and God is never apart from it nor limited by it. When we act wrongly, we create negative *karma* for ourselves and must then live through experiences of suffering to fulfill the law of *karma*. Such *karmas* may be painful, but they were generated from our own thoughts and deeds. God never punishes us, even if we do not believe in Him. It is by means of worship of and meditation on God that our self-created sufferings are softened and assuaged. God is the God of all—of the believers within all religions, and of the nonbelievers, too. God does not destroy the wicked and redeem the righteous; but grants the precious gift of liberation to all souls. The *Āgamas* state, “When the soul gradually reduces and then stops altogether its participation in darkness and inauspicious powers, the Friend of the World, God, reveals to the soul the limitless character of its knowledge and activity.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.



# Chaturdharmāḥ चतुर्धर्माः



## Four Dharmas

They say of a man who speaks the truth, “He speaks the *dharma*,” or of a man who speaks the *dharma*, “He speaks the truth.” Verily, both these are the same thing.

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Bṛihadāraṇyaka  
Upanishad 1.4.14. UPH, 84*

## What Is Dharma? What Are Its Forms?

ŚLOKA 56

*Dharma* is the law of being, the orderly fulfillment of an inherent nature and destiny. *Dharma* is of four main divisions, which are God's law at work on four levels of our existence: universal, human, social and personal. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

When God created the universe, He endowed it with order, with the laws to govern creation. *Dharma* is God's divine law prevailing on every level of existence, from the sustaining cosmic order to religious and moral laws which bind us in harmony with that order. We are maintained by *dharma*, held in our most perfect relationship within a complex universe. Every form of life, every group of men, has its *dharma*, the law of its being. When we follow *dharma*, we are in conformity with the Truth that inheres and instructs the universe, and we naturally abide in closeness to God. *Adharma* is opposition to divine law. *Dharma* prevails in the laws of nature and is expressed in our culture and heritage. It is piety and ethical practice, duty and obligation. It is the path which leads us to liberation. Universal *dharma* is known as *ṛita*. Social *dharma* is *varṇa dharma*. Human *dharma* is known as *āśrama dharma*. Our personal *dharma* is *svadharma*. Hinduism, the purest expression of these four timeless *dharma*s, is called Sanātana Dharma. The *Vedas* proclaim, "There is nothing higher than *dharma*. Verily, that which is *dharma* is Truth." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is Signified by Universal Dharma?

ŚLOKA 57

Universal law, known in the Vedas as *ṛita*, is cosmic order, God's rule at work throughout the physical province. It is the infinite intelligence or consciousness in nature, the sustaining cosmic design and organizing force. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

*Ṛita* is the underlying divine principle and universal law regulating nature, from the voyage of stars in vast galactic orbits to the flux of infinitesimal subatomic energies. *Ṛita* is the Tao. It is destiny and the road to destiny. When we are in tune with universal *dharma*, and realize that man is an integral part of nature and not above it or dominating it, then we are in tune with God. All Hindus feel they are guests on the planet with responsibilities to nature, which when fulfilled balance its responsibilities to them. The physical body was gathered from nature and returns to it. Nature is exquisitely complex and orderly. The coconut always yields a coconut tree, a lotus a lotus, a rose a rose, not another species. How constant nature is, and yet how diverse, for in mass producing its creations, no two ever look exactly alike. Yes, the Hindu knows himself to be a part of nature and seeks to bring his life into harmony with the universal path, the sustaining cosmic force. The *Vedas* proclaim, "Earth is upheld by Truth. Heaven is upheld by the sun. The solar regions are supported by eternal laws, *ṛita*. The elixir of divine love is supreme in heaven." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Nature of Social Dharma?

ŚLOKA 58

Social law, or *varṇa dharma*, consists of the occupation, duties and responsibilities we must fulfill as a member of our nation, community and family. An important aspect of this *dharma* is religious and moral law. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Every human society defines a complex stratification of community interaction. Scholarly, pious souls of exceptional learning are the wise *brāhmins*. Lawmakers and law-enforcers are the guardian *kshatriyas*. Bankers and businessmen are merchant *vaiśyas*. Laborers, workers and artisans are *śūdras*. In addition to these four classes, or *varṇas*, are hundreds of castes, or *jātis*. In Hindu societies, class and caste, which dictates one's occupation and community, is largely hereditary. However, these birth-imposed categories can be transcended by the ambitious who enter new careers through education, skill and persistence. Social *dharma* is fulfilled in adherence to the laws of our nation, to our community responsibilities and to our obligations among family and friends. A comprehensive system of duties, morals and religious observances make up God's law at work in our daily life. Rightly followed, *varṇa dharma* enhances individual and family progress and ensures the continuity of culture. The *Vedas* say, "When a man is born, whoever he may be, there is born simultaneously a debt to the Gods, to the sages, to the ancestors and to men." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Nature of Human Dharma?

ŚLOKA 59

Human law, or *āśrama dharma*, is the natural expression and maturing of the body, mind and emotions through four progressive stages of earthly life: student, householder, elder advisor and religious solitaire. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

The four *āśramas* are “stages of striving,” in pursuit of the *purushārthas*: righteousness, wealth, pleasure and liberation. Our first 24 years of life are a time of intense learning. Around age 12, we enter formally the *brahmacharya āśrama* and undertake the study and skills that will serve us in later life. From 24 to 48, in the *grihastha āśrama*, we work together as husband and wife to raise the family, increasing wealth and knowledge through our profession, serving the community and sustaining the members of the other three *āśramas*. In the *vānaprastha āśrama*, from 48 to 72, slowly retiring from public life, we share our experience by advising and guiding younger generations. After age 72, as the physical forces wane, we turn fully to scripture, worship and *yoga*. This is the *sannyāsa āśrama*, which differs from the formal life of ochre-robed monks. Thus, our human *dharma* is a natural awakening, expression, maturing and withdrawal from worldly involvement. The *Vedas* say, “Pursuit of the duties of the stage of life to which each one belongs—that, verily, is the rule! Others are like branches of a stem. With this, one tends upwards; otherwise, downwards.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Nature of Personal Dharma?

### ŚLOKA 60

Personal law, or *svadharma*, is our own perfect individual pattern in life. It is the sum of our accumulated seed *karmas* as they relate to the collective effect on us of *ṛita*, *āśrama* and *varṇa dharma*. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

Each human being has an individual, personal *dharma*. This *dharma* is determined by two things: the *karmas*, both good and bad, from past lives; and the three *dharma*s of this life—universal, human and social. *Svadharma*, “one’s own law,” is molded by our background and experiences, tendencies and desires—indicated by astrology—all of which determine our personality, profession and associations. The key to discovering and understanding personal *dharma* is the worship of Lord Gaṇeśa, the God of memory, time and wisdom, who knows our past lives and can clarify our most perfect pattern, our right path in life. When we follow this unique pattern—guided by *guru*, wise elders and the knowing voice of our soul—we are content and at peace with ourselves and the world. *Dharma* is to the individual what its normal development is to a seed—the orderly fulfillment of an inherent nature and destiny. A Vedic prayer implores, “That splendor that resides in an elephant, in a king, among men, or within the waters, with which the Gods in the beginning came to Godhood, with that same splendor make me splendid, O Lord.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Sadāchārah सदाचारः



## Good Conduct

The one who has not turned away from wickedness, who has no peace, who is not concentrated, whose mind is restless—he cannot realize the *ātman*, who is known by wisdom.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Kathā Upanishad 2.24. VE, 710*

## What Is the Meaning of Good Conduct?

ŚLOKA 61

Good conduct is right thought, right speech and right action. It is virtuous deeds in harmony with divine law, reflecting the soul's innate purity. As a staff is used to climb a mountain, so must virtue be used in life. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Good conduct, *sadāchāra*, determines our behavior in day-to-day life. We should be uplifting to our fellow man, not critical or injurious. We should be loving and kind, not hateful or mean. We should express the soul's beautiful qualities of self-control, modesty and honesty. We should be a good example to others and a joy to be around, not a person to be avoided. Good conduct is the sum of spiritual living and comes through keeping good company. When heart and mind are freed of baseness, when desires have been tempered and excesses avoided, *dharma* is known and followed, and good conduct naturally arises. The Hindu fosters humility and shuns arrogance, seeks to assist, never to hinder, finds good in others and forgets their faults. There is no other way to be called a true devotee, but to conduct ourself properly within ourself and among our fellow men. The *Vedas* say, "Let there be no neglect of Truth. Let there be no neglect of *dharma*. Let there be no neglect of welfare. Let there be no neglect of prosperity. Let there be no neglect of study and teaching. Let there be no neglect of the duties to the Gods and the ancestors." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.



## What Are Good Conduct's Four Keys?

ŚLOKA 62

Purity, devotion, humility and charity are the four keys to good conduct. Of these, purity is the cardinal virtue. We cultivate purity by thinking, speaking and doing only that which is conceived in compassion for all. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Purity is the pristine and natural state of the soul. We cultivate purity by refraining from anger and retaliation, by maintaining a clean and healthy body, and by guarding our virginity until marriage. We cultivate purity by seeking good company and by living a disciplined life. Devotion is love of God, Gods and *guru*, and dedication to family and friends. We cultivate devotion through being loyal and trustworthy. We cultivate devotion through worship and selfless service. Humility is mildness, modesty, reverence and unpretentiousness. We cultivate humility by taking the experiences of life in understanding and not in reaction, and by seeing God everywhere. We cultivate humility through showing patience with circumstances and forbearance with people. Charity is selfless concern and caring for our fellow man. It is generous giving without thought of reward, always sharing and never hoarding. We cultivate charity through giving to the hungry, the sick, the homeless, the elderly and the unfortunate. The *Vedas* explain, “As to a mountain that’s enflamed, deer and birds do not resort—so, with knowers of God, sins find no shelter.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## From Whom Is Good Conduct Learned?

ŚLOKA 63

The first teacher in matters of good conduct is our conscience. To know what is right and what is wrong we can also turn to God, to our *satguru* and *swāmīs*, to scripture and to our elders, family and trusted friends. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Divine laws cannot be avoided. They do not rule us from above but are wrought into our very nature. Even death cannot efface the *karma* created by evil deeds. Good conduct alone can resolve woeful *karmas*. Therefore, it is essential that we learn and adhere to good conduct. Good people are the best teachers of good conduct, and should be sought out and heeded when we need help or advice. Talk with them, the wise ones, and in good judgment be guided accordingly. Ethical scriptures should be read and studied regularly and their wisdom followed. The loud voice of our soul, ever heard within our conscience, is a worthy guide. When we grasp the subtle mechanism of *karma*, we wisely follow the good path. Good conduct, or *sadāchāra*, for the Hindu is summarized in five obligatory duties, called *pañcha nitya karmas*: virtuous living, *dharma*; worship, *upāsana*; holy days, *utsava*; pilgrimage, *tīrthayātrā*; and sacraments, *samiskāras*. The *Vedas* offer this guidance, “If you have doubt concerning conduct, follow the example of high souls who are competent to judge, devout, not led by others, not harsh, but lovers of virtue.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Are the Ten Classical Restraints?

ŚLOKA 64

Hinduism's ethical restraints are contained in ten simple precepts called *yamas*. They define the codes of conduct by which we harness our instinctive forces and cultivate the innate, pristine qualities of our soul. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

The *yamas* and *niyamas* are scriptural injunctions for all aspects of thought and behavior. They are advice and simple guidelines, not commandments. The ten *yamas*, defining the ideals of *charyā*, are: 1) *ahimsā*, “noninjury,” do not harm others by thought, word or deed; 2) *satya*, “truthfulness,” refrain from lying and betraying promises; 3) *asteya*, “nonstealing,” neither steal nor covet nor enter into debt; 4) *brahmacharya*, “divine conduct,” control lust by remaining celibate when single, leading to faithfulness in marriage; 5) *kshamā*, “patience,” restrain intolerance with people and impatience with circumstances; 6) *dhṛiti*, “steadfastness,” overcome nonperseverance, fear, indecision and changeableness; 7) *dayā*, “compassion,” conquer callous, cruel and insensitive feelings toward all beings; 8) *ārjava*, “honesty,” renounce deception and wrongdoing; 9) *mitāhāra*, “moderate appetite,” neither eat too much, nor consume meat, fish, fowl or eggs; 10) *śaucha*, “purity,” avoid impurity in body, mind and speech. The *Vedas* proclaim, “To them belongs yon stainless Brahma world in whom there is no crookedness and falsehood, nor trickery.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Are the Ten Classical Observances?

ŚLOKA 65

Hinduism's religious tenets are contained in ten terse precepts called *niyamas*. They summarize the essential practices that we observe and the soulful virtues and qualities we strive daily to perfect. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

BHĀSHYA

Good conduct is a combination of avoiding unethical behavior and performing virtuous, spiritualizing acts. The accumulated wisdom of thousands of years of Hindu culture has evolved ten *niyamas*, or religious observances. These precepts defining the ideals of *kriyā* are: 1) *hrī*, "remorse," be modest and show shame for misdeeds; 2) *santoshā*, "contentment," seek joy and serenity in life; 3) *dāna*, "giving," tithe and give creatively without thought of reward; 4) *āstikya*, "faith," believe firmly in God, Gods, *guru* and the path to enlightenment; 5) *Īśvarapūjana*, "worship," cultivate devotion through daily *pūjā* and meditation; 6) *sidhānta śravaṇa*, "scriptural listening," study the teachings and listen to the wise of one's lineage; 7) *matī*, "cognition," develop a spiritual will and intellect with a *guru's* guidance; 8) *vrata*, "sacred vows," fulfill religious vows, rules and observances faithfully; 9) *japa*, "recitation," chant holy *mantras* daily; 10) *tapas*, "austerity," perform *sādhana*, penance, *tapas* and sacrifice. The *Vedas* state, "They indeed possess that Brahma world who possess austerity and chastity, and in whom the truth is established." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Ahimsā अहिंसा



## Noninjury

To the heavens be peace, to the sky and the Earth;  
to the waters be peace, to plants and all trees; to the  
Gods be peace, to Brahman be peace, to all men be  
peace, again and again—peace also to me!

*Śukla Yajur Veda 36.17. VE, 306*

## What Is the Great Virtue Called Ahimsā?

ŚLOKA 66

*Ahimsā*, or noninjury, is the first and foremost ethical principle of every Hindu. It is gentleness and nonviolence, whether physical, mental or emotional. It is abstaining from causing hurt or harm to all beings. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

To the Hindu the ground is sacred. The rivers are sacred. The sky is sacred. The sun is sacred. His wife is a Goddess. Her husband is a God. Their children are *devas*. Their home is a shrine. Life is a pilgrimage to liberation from rebirth, and no violence can be carried to the higher reaches of that ascent. While nonviolence speaks only to the most extreme forms of wrongdoing, *ahimsā*, which includes not killing, goes much deeper to prohibit the subtle abuse and the simple hurt. Rishi Patanjali described *ahimsā* as the great vow and foremost spiritual discipline which Truth-seekers must follow strictly and without fail. This extends to harm of all kinds caused by one's thoughts, words and deeds—including injury to the natural environment. Even the intent to injure, even violence committed in a dream, is a violation of *ahimsā*. Vedic *ṛishis* who revealed *dharma* proclaimed *ahimsā* as the way to achieve harmony with our environment, peace between peoples and compassion within ourselves. The Vedic edict is: “*Ahimsā* is not causing pain to any living being at any time through the actions of one's mind, speech or body.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Inner Source of Noninjury?

ŚLOKA 67

Two beliefs form the philosophical basis of noninjury. The first is the law of *karma*, by which harm caused to others unfailingly returns to oneself. The second is that the Divine shines forth in all peoples and things. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

The Hindu is thoroughly convinced that violence he commits will return to him by a cosmic process that is unerring. He knows that, by *karma*'s law, what we have done to others will be done to us, if not in this life then in another. He knows that he may one day be in the same position of anyone he is inclined to harm or persecute, perhaps incarnating in the society he most opposed in order to equalize his hates and fears into a greater understanding. The belief in the existence of God everywhere, as an all-pervasive, self-effulgent energy and consciousness, creates the attitude of sublime tolerance and acceptance toward others. Even *tolerance* is insufficient to describe the compassion and reverence the Hindu holds for the intrinsic sacredness within all things. Therefore, the actions of all Hindus living in the higher nature are rendered benign, or *ahimsā*. One would not hurt that which he reveres. The *Vedas* pronounce, "He who, dwelling in all things, yet is other than all things, whom all things do not know, whose body all things are, who controls all things from within—He is your soul, the Inner Controller, the Immortal." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Inner Source of Violence?

ŚLOKA 68

Violence is a reflection of lower, instinctive consciousness—fear, anger, greed, jealousy and hate—based in the mentality of separateness and unconnectedness, of good and bad, winners and losers, mine and yours. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Every belief creates certain attitudes. Attitudes govern our actions. Our actions can thus be traced to our inmost beliefs about ourself and the world around us. If those beliefs are erroneous, our actions will not be in tune with the universal *dharma*. For instance, the beliefs in the duality of self and other, of eternal heaven and hell, victors and vanquished, white forces and dark forces, create the attitudes that we must be on our guard, and are justified in giving injury, physically, mentally and emotionally to those whom we judge as bad, pagan, alien or unworthy. Such thinking leads to rationalizing so-called righteous wars and conflicts. As long as our beliefs are dualistic, we will continue to generate antagonism, and that will erupt here and there in violence. Those living in the lower, instinctive nature are society's antagonists. They are self-assertive, territorial, competitive, jealous, angry, fearful and rarely penitent of their hurtfulness. Many take sport in killing for the sake of killing, thieving for the sake of theft. The *Vedas* indicate, "This soul, verily, is overcome by nature's qualities. Now, because of being overcome, he goes on to confusedness." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.



## Is Vegetarianism Integral to Noninjury?

ŚLOKA 69

Hindus teach vegetarianism as a way to live with a minimum of hurt to other beings, for to consume meat, fish, fowl or eggs is to participate indirectly in acts of cruelty and violence against the animal kingdom. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

The abhorrence of injury and killing of any kind leads quite naturally to a vegetarian diet, *śākāhāra*. The meat-eater's desire for meat drives another to kill and provide that meat. The act of the butcher begins with the desire of the consumer. Meat-eating contributes to a mentality of violence, for with the chemically complex meat ingested, one absorbs the slaughtered creature's fear, pain and terror. These qualities are nourished within the meat-eater, perpetuating the cycle of cruelty and confusion. When the individual's consciousness lifts and expands, he will abhor violence and not be able to even digest the meat, fish, fowl and eggs he was formerly consuming. India's greatest saints have confirmed that one cannot eat meat and live a peaceful, harmonious life. Man's appetite for meat inflicts devastating harm on the Earth itself, stripping its precious forests to make way for pastures. The *Tirukural* candidly states, "How can he practice true compassion who eats the flesh of an animal to fatten his own flesh? Greater than a thousand *ghee* offerings consumed in sacrificial fires is not to sacrifice and consume any living creature." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## How Can Peace on Earth Be Achieved?

### ŚLOKA 70

Peace is a reflection of spiritual consciousness. It begins within each person, and extends to the home, neighborhood, nation and beyond. It comes when the higher nature takes charge of the lower nature. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

Until we have peace in our own heart, we can't hope for peace in the world. Peace is the natural state of the mind. It is there, inside, to be discovered in meditation, maintained through self-control, and then radiated out to others. The best way to promote peace is to teach families to be peaceful within their own homes by settling all conflicts quickly. At a national and international level, we will enjoy more peace as we become more tolerant. Religious leaders can help by teaching their congregations how to live in a world of differences without feeling threatened, without forcing their ways or will on others. World bodies can make laws which deplore and work to prevent crimes of violence. It is only when the higher-nature people are in charge that peace will truly come. There is no other way, because the problems of conflict reside within the low-minded group who only know retaliation as a way of life. The *Vedas* beseech, "Peace be to the Earth and to airy spaces! Peace be to heaven, peace to the waters, peace to the plants and peace to the trees! May all the Gods grant to me peace! By this invocation of peace may peace be diffused!" Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Dampatī दम्पती



## Husband and Wife

O Divines, may the husband and wife who with one accord offer the elixir of dedication with pure heart and propitiate you with the milk of sweet devotional prayers, constantly associated—may they acquire appropriate food, may they be able to offer sacrifice, and may they never fail in strength and vigor.

*Ṛig Veda* 8.31.5-6. RVP, 3,015

## What Is the Central Purpose of Marriage?

ŚLOKA 71

The two purposes of marriage are: the mutual support, both spiritual and material, of man and wife; and bringing children into the world. Marriage is a religious sacrament, a human contract and a civil institution. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Through marriage, a man and a woman each fulfill their *dharma*, becoming physically, emotionally and spiritually complete. He needs her tenderness, companionship and encouragement, while she needs his strength, love and understanding. Their union results in the birth of children and the perpetuation of the human race. Marriage is a three-fold state: it is a sacrament, a contract and an institution. As a sacrament, it is a spiritual union in which man and woman utter certain vows one to another and thus bind themselves together for life and for their souls' mutual benefit. As a contract, it is a personal agreement to live together as husband and wife, he to provide shelter, protection, sustenance, and she to care for the home and bear and nurture their children. As an institution, marriage is the lawful custom in society, bringing stability to the family and the social order. Marriage is a *jīvayajña*, a sacrifice of each small self to the greater good of the family and society. The *Vedas* exclaim, "I am he, you are she, I am song, you are verse, I am heaven, you are Earth. We two shall here together dwell, becoming parents of children." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Are the Duties of the Husband?

ŚLOKA 72

It is the husband's duty, his *purusha dharma*, to protect and provide for his wife and children. He, as head of the family, *griheśvara*, is responsible for its spiritual, economic, physical, mental and emotional security. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

By their physical, mental and emotional differences, the man is suited to work in the world and the woman to bear and raise their children in the home. The husband is, first, an equal participant in the procreation and upbringing of the future generation. Second, he is the generator of economic resources necessary for society and the immediate family. The husband must be caring, understanding, masculine, loving, affectionate, and an unselfish provider, to the best of his ability and through honest means. He is well equipped physically and mentally for the stress and demands placed upon him. When he performs his *dharma* well, the family is materially and emotionally secure. Still, he is not restricted from participation in household chores, remembering that the home is the wife's domain and she is its mistress. The *Vedas* implore, "Through this oblation, which invokes prosperity, may this bridegroom flourish anew; may he, with his manly energies, flourish the wife they have brought to him. May he excel in strength, excel in royalty! May this couple be inexhaustible in wealth that bestows luster a thousand fold!" Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Are Special Duties of the Wife?

ŚLOKA 73

It is the wife's duty, her *strī dharma*, to bear, nurse and raise the children. She is the able homemaker, standing beside her husband as the mother and educator of their children and the home's silent leader, *grihiṇī*. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

The biological differences between man and woman are part of their human *dharma*. The two together constitute a whole. They are equal partners in joy and sorrow, companions and helpmates, yet their functions differ. The Hindu home and family is the fortress of the Sanātana Dharma, which the wife and mother is duty-bound to maintain and thus to perpetuate the faith and create fine citizens. As long as the husband is capable of supporting the family, a woman should not leave the home to work in the world, though she may earn through home industry. The spiritual and emotional loss suffered by the children and the bad *karma* accrued from having a wife and mother work outside the home is never offset by the financial gain. The woman's more intuitive and emotional qualities of femininity, gentleness, modesty, kindness and compassion are needed for the children's proper care and development. The *Vedas* encourage, "May happiness await you with your children! Watch over this house as mistress of the home. Unite yourself wholly with your husband. Thus authority in speech till old age will be yours." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Hindu View of Sexuality?

### ŚLOKA 74

The purpose of sexual union is to express and foster love's beautiful intimacy and to draw husband and wife together for procreation. While offering community guidance, Hinduism does not legislate sexual matters. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Sexual intercourse is a natural reproductive function, a part of the instinctive nature, and its pleasures draw man and woman together that a child may be conceived. It also serves through its intimacy to express and nurture love. It is love which endows sexual intercourse with its higher qualities, transforming it from an animal function to a human fulfillment. Intensely personal matters of sex as they affect the family or individual are not legislated, but left to the judgment of those involved, subject to community laws and customs. Hinduism neither condones nor condemns birth control, sterilization, masturbation, homosexuality, petting, polygamy or pornography. It does not exclude or draw harsh conclusions against any part of human nature, though scripture prohibits adultery and forbids abortion except to save a mother's life. Advice in such matters should be sought from parents, elders and spiritual leaders. The only rigid rule is wisdom, guided by tradition and virtue. The *Vedas* beseech, "May all the divine powers together with the waters join our two hearts in one! May the Messenger, the Creator and holy Obedience unite us." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Relation of Sex to Marriage?

ŚLOKA 75

Wisdom demands that the intimacies of sexual intercourse be confined to marriage. Marriages that are free of prior relationships are the truest and strongest, seldom ending in separation or divorce. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

BHĀSHYA

When a virgin man and woman marry and share physical intimacy with each other, their union is very strong and their marriage stable. This is because their psychic nerve currents, or *nāḍīs*, grow together and they form a one body and a one mind. Conversely, if the man or woman has had intercourse before the marriage, the emotional-psychic closeness of the marriage will suffer, and this in proportion to the extent of promiscuity. For a marriage to succeed, sexual intercourse must be preserved for husband and wife. Each should grow to understand the other's needs and take care to neither deny intercourse to the married partner nor make excessive demands. A healthy, unrepressed attitude should be kept regarding sexual matters. Boys and girls must be taught to value and protect their chastity as a sacred treasure, and to save the special gift of intimacy for their spouse. They should be taught the importance of loyalty in marriage and to avoid even the thought of adultery. The *Vedas* intone, "Sweet be the glances we exchange, our faces showing true concord. Enshrine me in your heart and let one spirit dwell with us." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.



# Vivāhah विवाहः



## Marriage

Agni has now returned the bride endowed with splendors and length of life. May she live a lengthy span of days and may her husband live a hundred autumns.

*Rig Veda 10.85.39. VE, 256*

## What Is the Basis for a Happy Marriage?

### ŚLOKA 76

A happy marriage is based first and foremost on a mature love, not a romantic ideal of love. It requires selflessness and constant attention. A successful marriage is one which both partners work at making successful. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

While not all marriages must be arranged, there is wisdom in arranged marriages, which have always been an important part of Hindu culture. Their success lies in the families' judgment to base the union on pragmatic matters which will outlast the sweetest infatuation and endure through the years. The ideal age for women is from 18 to 25, men from 21 to 30. Stability is enhanced if the boy has completed his education, established earnings through a profession and is at least five years older than the girl. Mature love includes accepting obligations, duties and even difficulties. The couple should be prepared to work with their marriage, not expecting it to take care of itself. It is good for bride and groom to write out a covenant by hand, each pledging to fulfill certain duties and promises. They should approach the marriage as holy, advancing both partners spiritually. It is important to marry a spouse who is dependable, chaste and serious about raising children in the Hindu way, and then worship and pray together. The *Vedas* say, "Devoted to sacrifice, gathering wealth, they serve the Immortal and honor the Gods, united in mutual love." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Must We Marry Within Our Religion?

ŚLOKA 77

Tradition requires that the wife adopt the religion and lifestyle of her husband. Thus, Hindu women wanting to continue their family culture and religion will, in wisdom, marry a spouse of the same sect and lineage. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

The mutual spiritual unfoldment of man and wife is a central purpose of marriage. When we marry outside our religion, we create disharmony and conflict for ourselves and our children. Such a marriage draws us away from religious involvement instead of deeper into its fulfillment. For marriage to serve its spiritual purpose to the highest, husband and wife should hold the same beliefs and share the same religious practices. Their harmony of minds will be reflected in the children. A man's choice of spouse is a simple decision, because his wife is bound to follow him. For a woman, it is a far more important decision, because her choice determines the future of her religious and social life. While his lifestyle will not change, hers will. Should a Hindu marry a non-Hindu, traditional wisdom dictates that the wife conform to her husband's heritage, and that the children be raised in his faith, with no conflicting beliefs or customs. The husband may be invited to convert to her faith before marriage. The *Vedas* pray, "United your resolve, united your hearts, may your spirits be one, that you may long together dwell in unity and concord!" Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## How Are Hindu Marriages Arranged?

ŚLOKA 78

Marriage is a union not only of boy and girl, but of their families, too. Not leaving such crucial matters to chance, all family members participate in finding the most suitable spouse for the eligible son or daughter. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

In seeking a bride for a son, or a groom for a daughter, the goal is to find a mate compatible in age, physique, education, social status, religion, character and personality. Elders may first seek a partner among families they know and esteem for the kinship bonds the marriage would bring. Astrology is always consulted for compatibility. Of course, mutual attraction and full consent of the couple are crucial. Once a potential spouse is selected, informal inquiries are made by a relative or friend. If the response is encouraging, the father of the girl meets the father of the boy and presents a proposal. Next, the families gather at the girl's home to get acquainted and to allow the couple to meet and discuss their expectations. If all agree to the match, the boy's mother adorns the girl with a gold necklace, or gifts are exchanged between families, signifying a firm betrothal. Rejoicing begins with the engagement ceremony and culminates on the wedding day. The *Vedas* say, "Straight be the paths and thornless on which our friends will travel to present our suit! May Aryaman and Bhaga lead us together! May heaven grant us a stable marriage!" Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Hindu Family Structure?

### ŚLOKA 79

The main Hindu social unit is the joint family, usually consisting of several generations living together under the guidance of the father and mother. Each joint family is part of a greater body called the extended family. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

A joint family lives under one roof. It includes a father and mother, their sons, grandsons and great-grandsons and all their spouses, as well as all daughters, granddaughters and great-granddaughters until they are married. The head of the family is the father, assisted by his wife, or in his absence the eldest son, encouraged by his mother, and in his absence, the next eldest brother. The family head delegates responsibilities to members according to their abilities. The mother oversees household activities, nurturance, hospitality and gift-giving. Religious observances are the eldest son's responsibility. The joint family is founded on selfless sharing, community ownership and the fact that each member's voice and opinion is important. The extended family includes one or more joint families, community elders, married daughters and their kindred, close friends and business associates. It is headed by the family *guru*, priests and *paṇḍitas*. The *Vedas* offer blessings: "Dwell in this home; never be parted! Enjoy the full duration of your days, with sons and grandsons playing to the end, rejoicing in your home to your heart's content." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## How Are Marital Problems Reconciled?

ŚLOKA 80

When problems arise in marriage, Hindus study the scriptures and seek advice of family, elders and spiritual leaders. A good marriage requires that the husband be masculine and the wife feminine. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

BHĀSHYA

Success in marriage depends on learning to discuss problems with each other freely and constructively. Criticizing one another, even mentally, must be strictly avoided, for that erodes a marriage most quickly. Under no circumstance should a husband hit or abuse his wife, nor should a wife dominate or torment her husband. It is important to not be jealous or overly protective, but to have trust in one another and live up to that trust. Problems should be resolved daily before sleep. If inharmony persists, advice of elders should be sought. A reading and reaffirmation of original marriage covenants and an astrological assessment may provide a common point of reference and a foundation for mutual sacrifice and understanding. The husband who does not take the lead is not fulfilling his duty. The wife who takes an aggressive lead in the marriage makes her husband weak. She must be shy to make him bold. Couples keep a healthy attitude toward sex, never offering it as reward or withholding it as punishment. The *Vedas* say, "Be courteous, planning and working in harness together. Approach, conversing pleasantly, like-minded, united." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

Apatyam

अपत्यम्



## Children

O Lord of the home, best finder of riches for  
our children are you. Grant to us splendor  
and strength, O Master of our home.

*Śukla Yajur Veda 3.39. VE, 343*

## What Is the Fulfillment of a Marriage?

ŚLOKA 81

Children are the greatest source of happiness in marriage. Householder life is made rich and complete when sons and daughters are born, at which time the marriage becomes a family and a new generation begins. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

The total fulfillment of the *grihastha dharma* is children. Marriage remains incomplete until the first child is born or adopted. The birth of the first child cements the family together. At the birth itself, the community of guardian *devas* of the husband, wife and child are eminently present. Their collective vibration showers blessings upon the home, making of it a full place, a warm place. It is the duty of the husband and wife to become father and mother. This process begins prior to conception with prayer, meditation and a conscious desire to bring a high soul into human birth and continues with providing the best possible conditions for its upbringing. Raising several children rewards the parents and their offspring as well. Large families are more cohesive, more stable, and are encouraged within the limits of the family's ability to care for them. Parents, along with all members of the extended family, are responsible to nurture the future generation through childhood into puberty and adulthood. The *Vedas* exclaim, "Blessed with sons and daughters, may they enjoy their full extent of life, decked with ornaments of gold." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.



## What Are the Main Duties of Parents?

ŚLOKA 82

The fundamental duty of parents is to provide food, shelter and clothing and to keep their children safe and healthy. The secondary duty is to bestow education, including instruction in morality and religious life. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Assuring the health and well-being of their offspring is the most essential duty of parents to their children, never to be neglected. Beyond this, parents should provide a good example to their children, being certain that they are taught the Hindu religious heritage and culture along with good values, ethics, strength of character and discipline. Sons and daughters should worship regularly at *pūjā* with the parents, and the Hindu sacraments should all be provided. Education in all matters is the duty of the parents, including teaching them frankly about sex, its sacredness and the necessity to remain chaste until marriage. Children must learn to respect and observe civil law and to honor and obey their elders. Parents must love their children dearly, and teach them to love. The best way to teach is by example: by their own life, parents teach their children how to live. The *Vedas* declare, “Of one heart and mind I make you, devoid of hate. Love one another as a cow loves the calf she has borne. Let the son be courteous to his father, of one mind with his mother. Let the wife speak words that are gentle and sweet to her husband.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## How Strictly Must Children Be Guided?

ŚLOKA 83

Parents should be most diligent in guiding their children toward virtue, protecting them from all bad company and influences, being strict yet never harsh or mean, allowing them prudent freedom in which to grow. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Children are constantly learning, and that learning must be guided carefully by the parents. The young's education, recreation and companions must be supervised. They should be taught the scriptures of their lineage. Their religious education is almost always in the hands of the parents. They should be disciplined to study hard, and challenged to excel and fulfill their natural talents. They should be praised and rewarded for their accomplishments. Children need and seek guidance, and only the parents can truly provide it. In general, it is the mother who provides love and encouragement, while the father corrects and disciplines. A child's faults if not corrected will be carried into adult life. Still, care should be taken to not be overly restrictive either. Children should never be struck, beaten, abused or ruled through a sense of fear. Children, be they young or old, have a *karma* and a *dharma* of their own. Their parents have a debt to pay them; and they have a debt to return later in life. The *Vedas* plead, "O friend of men, protect my children. O adorable one, protect my cattle. O sword of flame, protect my nourishment." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Should All Youths Be Urged to Marry?

ŚLOKA 84

All but the rare few inclined to monastic life should be encouraged to marry and schooled in the skills they will need to fulfill *dharma*. Young boys destined to be monastics should be raised as their *satguru's* progeny. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Traditionally, boys with monastic tendencies are encouraged and provided special training under their *satguru's* direction. It is considered a great blessing for the family to have a son become a monastic and later a *swāmī*. Generally, children should be taught to follow and prepare themselves for the householder path. Most boys will choose married life, and should be schooled in professional, technical skills. Girls are taught the refinements of household culture. Both girls and boys should be trained in the sacred Vedic arts and sciences, including the sixty-four crafts and social skills, called *kalās*. Boys benefit greatly when taught the profession of their father from a very young age. The mother is the role model for her daughters, whom she raises as the mothers of future families. Sons and daughters who are gay may not benefit from marriage, and should be taught to remain loyal in relationships and be prepared to cope with community challenges. The *Vedas* pray, “May you, O love divine, flow for the acquisition of food of wisdom and for the prosperity of the enlightened person who praises you; may you grant him excellent progeny.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## How Is Family Harmony Maintained?

ŚLOKA 85

In the Hindu family, mutual respect, love and understanding are the bedrock of harmony. By not fighting, arguing or criticizing, members cultivate a spiritual environment in which all may progress. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

BHĀSHYA

For a harmonious joint family, it is vital to make the home strong, the center of activity and creativity, kept beautiful and clean, a sanctuary for each member. While striving to increase wealth, the wise families live within their means, content with what they have. Activities are planned to bring the family close through shared experiences. A gentle but firm hierarchy of respect for elders is maintained throughout the family. In general, the younger, in humility, defers to the elder, allowing him or her the last word. The elder is equally obliged to not misuse authority. Older children are responsible for the safety and care of their younger brothers and sisters. Disputes among children are settled by their mother, but not kept a secret from the father. Actual discipline in the case of misconduct is carried out by the father. When disputes arise in the extended family, responsibility for restoring harmony falls first to the men. However, any concerned member can take the lead if necessary. The *Vedas* say of *grihastha* life, “I will utter a prayer for such concord among family members as binds together the Gods, among whom is no hatred.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

# Bodhi Tantrah बोधितन्त्रः



## Ways of Wisdom

Perform noble deeds, good *karma* to shape. Praise  
the Holy One, the Holy Land to reach. This is the  
law we need, this is the law for men, who, blessed  
with Earthly life, seek the life eternal.

*Tirumantiram* 195. TM

## How Do We Overcome Life's Obstacles?

ŚLOKA 86

Just as a small leaf can obscure the sun when held before our eyes, so can the past cloud the present and hide our divinity. With Vedic methods, or *tantras*, we remove impediments to reveal the ever-present inner light. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

An ancient *Upanishad* defines twenty obstacles, *upasarga*, to spiritual progress: hunger, thirst, laziness, passion, lust, fear, shame, anxiety, excitement, adversity, sorrow, despair, anger, arrogance, delusion, greed, stinginess, ambitiousness, death and birth. Another obstacle is the intellect which, unguided by intuition, merely juggles memory and reason as a way of life. The experience of these impediments creates reactions that combine with the sum of all past impressions, *saṁskāras*, both positive and negative. Residing in the subconscious mind, these are the source of subliminal traits or tendencies, called *vāsanās*, which shape our attitudes and motivations. The troublesome *vāsanās* clouding the mind must be reconciled and released. There are beneficial *tantras* by which absolution can be attained for unhindered living, including *āyurveda*, *jyotisha*, daily *sādhana*, temple worship, selfless giving, the creative arts and the several *yogas*. The *Vedas* explain, “Even as a mirror covered with dust shines brightly when cleaned, so the embodied soul, seeing the truth of *ātman*, realizes oneness, attains the goal of life and becomes free from sorrow.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Are the Hindu's Daily Yoga Practices?

### ŚLOKA 87

Devout Hindus perform daily vigil, called *sandhyā upāsanā*, usually before dawn. This sacred period of *pūjā*, *japa*, chanting, singing, *haṭha yoga*, meditation and scriptural study is the foundation of personal life. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Each day hundreds of millions of Hindus awaken for the last fifth of the night, bathe, don fresh clothing, apply sectarian marks, called *tilaka*, and sit in a clean, quiet place for religious disciplines. Facing east or north, the devotional *pūjā* rites of *bhakti yoga* are performed. *Haṭha yoga*, hymn singing, *japa* and chanting are often included. Then follows scriptural study and meditation, listening to the sound current and contemplating the moonlike inner light during *brāhma muhūrta*, the auspicious hour-and-a-half period before dawn. The duly initiated practice advanced *yogas*, such as those revealed in *Merging with Śiva*—but only as directed by their *guru*, knowing that unless firmly harnessed, the *kuṇḍalinī* can manifest uncontrollable desires. Through the day, *karma yoga*, selfless religious service, is performed at every opportunity. Besides these *yogas* of doing, Hindus practice the central *yoga* of being—living a joyful, positive, harmonious life. The *Vedas* declare, “The mind, indeed, is this fleeting world. Therefore, it should be purified with great effort. One becomes like that which is in one’s mind—this is the everlasting secret.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## How Are Āyurveda and Jyotisha Used?

ŚLOKA 88

*Āyurveda* is the Hindu science of life, a complete, holistic medical system. *Jyotisha*, or Vedic astrology, is the knowledge of right timing and future potentialities. Both are vital tools for happy, productive living. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

*Āyurveda*, rooted in the *Atharva Upaveda*, deals with both the prevention and cure of disease. Its eight medical arts, with their *mantras*, *tantras* and *yogas*, are based on spiritual well-being and encompass every human need, physical, mental and emotional. *Āyurveda* teaches that the true healing powers reside in the mind at the quantum level. Wellness depends on the correct balance of three bodily humors, called *doshas*, maintained by a nutritious vegetarian diet, *dharmic* living and natural healing remedies. The kindred science of Vedic astrology, revealed in the *Jyotisha Vedāṅga*, likewise is vital to every Hindu's life. It propounds a dynamic cosmos of which we are an integral part, and charts the complex influence on us of important stars and planets, according to our birth chart. Knowing that the stars enliven positive and negative *karmas* we have brought into this life, in wisdom we choose an auspicious time, *śubha muhūrta*, for every important event. An orthodox Hindu family is not complete without its *jyotisha śāstri* or *āyurveda vaidya*. The *Vedas* beseech, "Peaceful for us be the planets and the Moon, peaceful the Sun and Rāhu." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.



## How Do Hindus Regard Art and Culture?

ŚLOKA 89

Hindus of every sect cherish art and culture as sacred. Music, art, drama and the dance are expressions of spiritual experience established in *śāstras* by God-inspired *ṛishis* as an integral flowering of temple worship. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Art and culture, from the Hindu perspective, are the sublime fruits of a profound civilization. Every Hindu strives to perfect an art or craft to manifest creative benefits for family and community. The home is a spiritual extension of the temple. Graced with the sounds of Indian sacred music, it is adorned with religious pictures, symbols and icons. The shrine is the most lavish room. Children are raised to appreciate Hindu art, music and culture, carefully trained in the sixty-four *kalās* and protected from alien influences. Human relationships are kept harmonious and uplifting through the attitudes, customs and refinements of Asian protocol, as revealed in *Living with Śiva*. Hindu attire is elegantly modest. Sectarian marks, called *tilaka*, are worn on the brow as emblems of sectarian identity. *Mantra* and prayer sanctify even simple daily acts—awakening, bathing, greetings, meals, meetings, outings, daily tasks and sleep. Annual festivals and pilgrimage offer a complete departure from worldly concerns. The *Vedas* proclaim, “Let the drum sound forth and let the lute resound, let the strings vibrate the exalted prayer to God.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Hindu Outlook on Giving?

ŚLOKA 90

Generous, selfless giving is among *dharma's* central fulfillments. Hospitality, charity and support of God's work on Earth arises from the belief that the underlying purpose of life is spiritual, not material. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

BHĀSHYA

Nowhere is giving better unfolded than in the ancient *Tirukural*, which says, "Of all duties, benevolence is unequaled in this world, and even in celestial realms. It is to meet the needs of the deserving that the worthy labor arduously to acquire wealth." Even the poorest Hindu practices charity according to his means. In this unselfish tradition, guests are treated as God. Friends, acquaintances, even strangers, are humbled by the overwhelming hospitality received. We share with the less fortunate. We care for the aged. We honor *swāmīs* with gifts of food, money and clothes. We encourage the spirit of helping and giving, called *dāna*, within the family, between families and their monastic and priestly communities. Many devout Hindus take the *daśama bhāga vrata*, a vow to pay ten percent of their income each month to an institution of their choice to perpetuate Sanātana Dharma. This centuries-old tithing practice is called *daśa-mānśa*. The *Vedas* wisely warn, "The powerful man should give to one in straits; let him consider the road that lies ahead! Riches revolve just like a chariot's wheels, coming to one man now, then to another." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Sam̐skārāḥ संस्काराः



## Sacraments

As days follow days in orderly succession, as seasons faithfully succeed one another, so shape the lives of these, O Supporter, that the younger may not forsake his elder.

*Rig Veda* 10.18.5. VE, 609

## What Are Hinduism's Rites of Passage?

ŚLOKA 91

Hindus celebrate life's crucial junctures by holy sacraments, or rites of passage, called *samskāras*, which impress the subconscious mind, inspire family and community sharing and invoke the Gods' blessings. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

For the Hindu, life is a sacred journey in which each milestone, marking major biological and emotional stages, is consecrated through sacred ceremony. Family and friends draw near, lending support, advice and encouragement. Through Vedic rites and *mantras*, family members or priests invoke the Gods for blessings and protection during important turning points, praying for the individual's spiritual and social development. There are many sacraments, from the rite of conception to the funeral ceremony. Each one, properly observed, empowers spiritual life and preserves Hindu culture, as the soul consciously accepts each succeeding discovery and duty in the order of God's creation. The essential *samskāras* are the rites of conception, the three-month blessing, hair-parting, birth, name-giving, head-shaving, first feeding, ear-piercing, first learning, puberty, marriage, elders' vows and last rites. The holy *Vedas* proclaim, "From Him come hymns, songs and sacrificial formulas, initiations, sacrifices, rites and all offerings. From Him come the year, the sacrificer and the worlds in which the Moon shines forth, and the Sun." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Are the Sacraments of Childhood?

### ŚLOKA 92

The essential religious sacraments of childhood are the *nāmakaraṇa*, name-giving; *chūḍākaraṇa*, head-shaving; *annaprāśana*, first solid food; *karṇavedha*, ear-piercing; and *vidyārambha*, commencement of formal study. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

*Saṁskāras* impress upon a child its holiness and innate possibilities for spiritual advancement. The *nāmakaraṇa* occurs in the temple or home, eleven to forty-one days after birth. The baby's name, astrologically chosen, is whispered in the right ear by the father, marking the formal entry into Hinduism. The head-shaving, *chūḍākaraṇa*, is performed at the temple between the thirty-first day and the fourth year. The *annaprāśana* celebrates the child's first solid food, when sweet rice is fed to the baby by the father or the family *guru*. Ear-piercing, *karṇavedha*, held for both girls and boys during the first, third or fifth year, endows the spirit of health and wealth. Girls are adorned with gold earrings, bangles and anklets; boys with two earrings and other gold jewelry. The *vidyārambha* begins formal education, when children write their first letter in a tray of rice. The *upanayana* begins, and the *samāvartana* ends, a youth's religious study. The *Vedas* beseech, "I bend to our cause at this solemn moment, O Gods, your divine and holy attention. May a thousand streams gush forth from this offering, like milk from a bountiful, pasture-fed cow." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Are the Sacraments of Adulthood?

ŚLOKA 93

The most important sacrament of adulthood is the *vi-vāha saṁskāra*, or marriage rite, preceded by a pledge of betrothal. A boy's or girl's coming of age is also consecrated through special ceremony in the home. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

As puberty dawns, the *ṛitu kāla* home-ceremony acknowledges a girl's first menses, and the *keśānta kāla* celebrates a boy's first beard-shaving. New clothing and jewelry fit for royalty are presented to and worn by the youth, who is joyously welcomed into the young adult community. Girls receive their first *sārī*, boys their first razor. Chastity is vowed until marriage. The next sacrament is the betrothal ceremony, called *nīśchitārtha* or *vāgdāna*, in which a man and woman are declared formally engaged by their parents with the exchange of jewelry and other gifts. Based on this commitment, they and their families begin planning a shared future. In the marriage sacrament, or *vivāha*, seven steps before God and Gods and tying the wedding pendant consecrate the union of husband and wife. This sacrament is performed before the *homa* fire in a wedding hall or temple and is occasioned by elaborate celebration. The *Grihya Sūtras* pronounce, "One step for strength, two steps for vitality, three steps for prosperity, four steps for happiness, five steps for cattle, six steps for seasons, seven steps for friendship. To me be devoted." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Are the Child-Bearing Sacraments?

ŚLOKA 94

The essential child-bearing *saṁskāras* are the *garbhādhāna*, rite of conception; the *punsavana*, third-month blessing; the *sīmantonṇaya*, hair-parting ceremony; and the *jātakarma*, welcoming the newborn child. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Conception, pregnancy's crucial stages and birth itself are all sanctified through sacred ceremonies performed privately by the husband. In the rite of conception, *garbhādhāna*, physical union is consecrated through prayer, *mantra* and invocation with the conscious purpose of bringing a high soul into physical birth. At the first stirring of life in the womb, in the rite called *punsavana*, special prayers are intoned for the protection and safe development of child and mother. Between the fourth and seventh months, in the *sīmantonṇaya*, or hair-parting sacrament, the husband lovingly combs his wife's hair, whispers sweet words praising her beauty and offers gifts of jewelry to express his affection and support. Through the *jātakarma saṁskāra*, the father welcomes the newborn child into the world, feeding it a taste of honey and clarified butter and praying for its long life, intelligence and well-being. The *Vedas* proclaim, "That in which the prayers, the songs and formulas are fixed firm like spokes in the hub of a cartwheel, in which are interwoven the hearts of all beings—may that spirit be graciously disposed toward me!" Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Are There Rites for the Wisdom Years?

ŚLOKA 95

Entrance into the elder advisor stage at age **48**, the marriage renewal at age **60**, and the dawn of renunciation at **72** may be signified by ceremony. Funeral rites, *antyeshti*, solemnize the transition called death. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

BHĀSHYA

Hindu society values and protects its senior members, honoring their experience and heeding their wise advice. Age 48 marks the entrance into the *vānaprastha āśrama*, celebrated in some communities by special ceremony. At age 60, husband and wife reaffirm marriage vows in a sacred ablution ceremony called *shashtyābda pūrti*. Age 72 marks the advent of withdrawal from society, the *sannyāsa āśrama*, sometimes ritually acknowledged but never confused with *sannyāsa dīkshā*. The *antyeshti*, or funeral ceremony, is a home sacrament performed by the family, assisted by a priest. Rites include guiding the individual's transition into the higher planes, preparing the body, cremation, bone-gathering, dispersal of ashes, home purification and commemorative ceremonies, *śrāddha*, one week, one month and one year from the day of death, and sometimes longer, according to local custom. Through the *antyeshti*, the soul is released to the holy feet of Śiva. The *Vedas* counsel, "Attain your prime; then welcome old age, striving by turns in the contest of life. May the Ordainer, maker of good things, be pleased to grant you length of days." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.



Utsavāḥ

उत्सवाः



## Festivals

Praise our Lord in devotion congregational. Sing His praise within, and His feet adore. Dance within and know Him. Then He yearns after you, like the cow after its calf.

*Tirumantiram 2109. TM*

## What Are the Festival Days of Śaivism?

ŚLOKA 96

Festivals are special times of communion with God and Gods, of family and community sharing and *sādhana*. Śaivites observe numerous festivals in the temple and the home, and special holy days each week and month. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Monday is the Hindu holy day in the North of India, and Friday in the South, set aside each week for attending the temple, cleaning and decorating the home shrine, devout prayer, *japa* and scriptural study. These are not days of rest, for we carry on our usual work. Among the major Deity festivals are Mahāśivarātri, Vaikāsi Viśākhā, Gaṇeśa Chaturthī, Skanda Shashthī, Kṛittikā Dīpam, Vināyaka Vratam, Ārdrā Darśanam and Tai Pusam. Temples also hold a ten-day annual festival called Brahmotsava, often on the Uttarāphalgunī *nakshatra* in March-April, as well as honor the anniversary day of their founding. Festivals are auspicious and sacred days of family and community togetherness, and of *sādhana*, fasting, meditation, worship and retreat from worldly concerns. Śaivites offer special prayers to Śiva, Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya on propitious days each month according to the Hindu sacred calendar. The *Vedas* proclaim, “Behold now a man who unwinds and sets the thread, a man who unwinds it right up to the vault of heaven. Here are the pegs; they are fastened to the place of worship. The *Sāma Veda* hymns are used for weaving shuttles.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Are the Primary Festivals to Śiva?

ŚLOKA 97

Mahāśivarātri, Śiva's great night, venerates Paraśiva. Kṛittikā Dīpam celebrates the infinite light of Parāśakti. Ārdrā Darśanam invokes the blessings of Parameśvara—Lord Śiva Nāṭarāja in His blissful Cosmic Dance. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Mahāśivarātri is the night before the new-moon day in February-March. We observe it both as a discipline and a festivity, keeping a strict fast and all-night vigil, meditating, intoning Śiva's 1,008 names, singing His praise, chanting Śrī Rudram, bathing the Śivaliṅga and being near the *vairāgis* as they strive to realize Paraśiva. On Kṛittikā Dīpam, the Kṛittikā *nakshatra* in November-December, we honor—with oil lamps everywhere, village bonfires and special temple *ārati*—God Śiva as an infinite pillar of light. This is an important festival in Murugan temples. On Ārdrā Darśanam, during the Ārdrā *nakshatra* of December-January, Lord Nāṭarāja receives elaborate *abhisheka* and is beseeched for *yogic* union, prosperity and matrimonial success. He is again lavishly invoked on the Uttarāṣṭhī *nakshatra* in June-July and on four other days each year. Special monthly days for Śiva worship are the two 13th *tithis*, called *pradosha*. The *Vedas* proclaim, "The Lord, God, all-pervading and omnipresent, dwells in the heart of all beings. Full of grace, He ultimately gives liberation to all creatures by turning their faces toward Himself." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Are the Major Gaṇeśa Festivals?

ŚLOKA 98

Gaṇeśa Chaturthī is a joyous celebration of Gaṇeśa's birthday. Vināyaka Vratam is twenty-one days of fasting and daily temple worship. Pañcha Gaṇapati is a five-day family festival of harmony and gift-giving. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

On Gaṇeśa Chaturthī, in August-September, elaborate temple *pūjās* are held. Worship is also given in the home shrine to a clay image of Gaṇeśa that we make or obtain. At the end of the day, or after ten days, we join others in a grand parade, called *visarjana*, to a river, temple tank, lake or sea-shore, where we immerse the image, symbolizing Gaṇeśa's release into universal consciousness. During the twenty-one days of Vināyaka Vratam, in November-December, devotees vow to attend daily Gaṇeśa *pūjā*, fasting on water and taking a full meal after sunset. Pañcha Gaṇapati, December 21 to 25, is a modern five-day festival of gift-giving, dear to children. Families invoke His five *śaktis*, one on each day—creating harmony in the home, concord among relatives, neighbors and friends, good business and public relations, cultural upliftment and heartfelt charity. Gaṇeśa's monthly holy day is Chaturthī, the fourth *tithi* after the new moon. The *Vedas* implore, “O Lord of Categories, thou art the Lord, the seer of seers, unrivaled in wealth, king of elders, lord of the principle of principles. Hear us and take thy place, bringing with thee all enjoyments.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Are the Main Kārttikeya Festivals?

### ŚLOKA 99

Vaikāsi Viśākhā celebrates the anniversary of Lord Kārttikeya's creation. Skanda Shashthī is a six-day festival honoring His conquest of light over darkness. Tai Pusam is a time of *sādhana* and public penance. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

On Vaikāsi Viśākhā day, Lord Kārttikeya's birthstar, Viśākhā *nakshatra*, in May-June, elaborate *abhisheka* is conducted in all His temples. It is a time of gift-giving to *paṇḍitas* and great souls, weddings, feedings for the poor, caring for trees, spiritual initiation, *dīkshā*, and conclaves of holy men. Skanda Shashthī is celebrated on the six days after the new moon in October-November with festive processions and *pūjās* invoking His protection and grace. It honors Kārttikeya's receiving the *vel*, His lance of spiritual illumination, *jñāna śakti*, and culminates in a dramatic victory celebration of spiritual light over *asuric* darkness. Tai Pusam occurs on Pushya *nakshatra* in January-February. During this festival we fast and perform public penance, called *kavadi*, seeking Kārttikeya's blessings to dispel our selfishness, pride and vanity. His special monthly days are Kṛittikā *nakshatra* and Shashthī, the sixth *tithi* after the new moon. The *Vedas* say, "Like the cry of watchful birds swimming in water, like the loud claps of thundering rain clouds, like the joyful streams gushing from the mountain, so have our hymns sounded forth to the Lord." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Are Other Important Festivals?

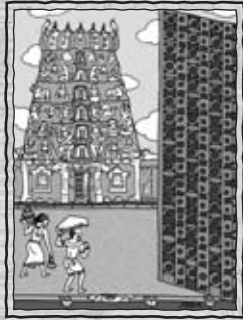
ŚLOKA 100

Besides the temple festivals, there is a multitude of home, community and national celebrations, notably *Dīpāvalī*, Hindu New Year, *Tai Pongal*, *guru pūjā* days, *kumbha melas*, *Jayantī* and *Guru Pūrṇimā*. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

BHĀSHYA

*Dīpāvalī*, the “festival of lights” in October-November, is a most popular festival, esteemed as a day of Hindu solidarity, when all sects gather in love and trust. It begins the financial year and is celebrated by opening new accounts, giving greeting cards, clothing and other gifts and by lighting rows of oil lamps. Family bonds are strengthened and forgivenesses sought. The several Hindu New Years are important observations. *Tai Pongal*, in January-February, is a harvest thanksgiving and invocation for prosperity. God *Sūrya*, the Sun, is honored, and daughters are presented with gifts. We venerate saints and sages by conducting *guru pūjā* on the anniversary of their passing, or *mahāsamādhi*. We celebrate our *satguru*’s birthday, or *jayantī*, with special *pūjā* to his *śrī pādukā*, “sandals,” or holy feet. We honor him again on *Guru Pūrṇimā*, the full moon of July. *Kumbha melas*, humanity’s largest gatherings, are held at four pilgrimage centers in India every three years. The *Vedas* proclaim, “Thus have we now approached the All-Knower, the one who is the best procurer of good things. Endow us, O Majesty, with strength and glory.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

# Śivālayah शिवालयः



## Śiva Temples

Of what use is the body that never walked around  
the temple of Śiva, offering Him flowers in the  
worship rite? Of what use is this body?

*Tirumurai 4.9.8. ps, 44*

## What Is the Nature of the Śiva Temple?

### ŚLOKA 101

The Śiva temple is the abode of God Śiva and Gods and the precinct in which the three worlds consciously commune. It is specially sanctified, possessing a ray of spiritual energy connecting it to the celestial worlds. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

The three pillars of Śaivism are the temples, the scriptures and the satgurus. These we revere, for they sustain and preserve the ancient wisdom. Śiva temples, whether they be small village sanctuaries or towering citadels, are esteemed as God's home and consecrated abode. In the Śiva temple we draw close to God Śiva and find a refuge from the world. His grace, permeating everywhere, is most easily known within the precincts of the Śiva temple. It is in the purified milieu of the temple that the three worlds commune most perfectly, that devotees can establish harmony with inner-plane spiritual beings. When the spiritual energy, *śakti*, invoked by the *pūjā* permeates the sanctum sanctorum and floods out to the world, Śaivites know they are in a most holy place where God and the Gods commune with them. Within most Śiva temples are private rooms, sanctums, for Lord Gaṇeśa and Lord Kārttikeya, and shrines for the many Gods and saints. The *Vedas* explain, "Even as the radiance of the sun enlightens all regions, above, below, and slantwise, so that only God, glorious and worthy of worship, rules over all His creation." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.



## How Are Temples Founded and Built?

ŚLOKA 102

Śiva temples are founded by God Himself, often designated in a vision or dream of a devout Śaivite, then erected by temple craftsmen usually following Āgamic law. In such a holy place, holiness itself can reside. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Because of its holiness, a Śiva temple is most often and properly established by God Śiva through His devotees and not founded by men. Once the site is known, hereditary temple architects, known as *sthapatis*, are commissioned to design and construct the temple. By tradition, every stone is set in place according to the sacred architecture found in the Āgamic scriptures. When properly consecrated, the temple becomes a place upon the Earth in which the three worlds can communicate for the upliftment of mankind and the fulfillment of Śiva's *dharmic* law. Śiva has deliberately established many temples to communicate His love to His children throughout the world, who live in every country of the world and long for their Lord's ever-present love. They build temples in His name and install His image, chant His praises and thus invoke His presence. Lord Śiva accepts all these temples as His own and sends a divine ray to vivify and vitalize them. Śiva's *Vedas* announce, "Brahman is the priest, Brahman the sacrifice; by Brahman the posts are erected. From Brahman the officiating priest was born; in Brahman is concealed the oblation." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## When Should One Attend the Temple?

ŚLOKA 103

We attend the temple to commune with God Śiva, Kārtikeya or Gaṇeśa at least once each week and additionally on auspicious days of the month, yearly festival days and on the holiest day of the year, Mahāśivarātri. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Śaivites consider it most important to live near a Śiva temple, and we build one wherever we find ourselves in the world. This is a most meritorious act, earning blessings in this life and the next. Religious life centers around the temple. It is here, in God's home, that we nurture our relationship with the Divine. Not wanting to stay away too long, we visit the temple weekly, though women never go during their monthly period. We strive to attend each major festival, when the *śakti* of the Deity is most powerful, and pilgrimage to a far-off temple annually. Devout Śiva *bhaktas* attend daily *pūjā* in the temple. All Śaivites visit the temple on Śiva's most sacred day of the year, Mahāśivarātri. Śaivite temples are the most ancient of all. Being the homes of the Gods and God, they are approached with great reverence and humility. Draw near the temple as you would approach a king, a governor, a president of a great realm, anticipating with a little trepidation your audience with him. The *Vedas* say, "May the Lord find pleasure in our song of praise! Priest among men, may he offer due homage to the heavenly beings! Great, O Lord, is your renown." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## How Does One Attend a Śiva Temple?

### ŚLOKA 104

Approaching with deep reverence, we begin our worship with Gaṇeśa, circumambulate the temple and proceed to the main sanctum for *pūjā*. After receiving the sacraments, we sit quietly before taking our leave. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

With offerings in hand, leaving our shoes outside, we enter through the *gopura*, or temple tower, wash hands, feet and mouth, and seek blessings at Lord Gaṇeśa's shrine. Next we follow the outer *prakara*, or hallway, clockwise around the *mahāmaṇḍapa*, central chambers. Inside we leave our worldly thoughts at the *balipīṭha*, or offering place, then prostrate before the *dhvajastambha*, temple flagpole, and worship Nandi, the sacred bull. Next we circumambulate the central sanctum, *garbhagriha*, usually three times, returning to its entrance for worship. During *pūjā*, we stand with hands folded or in *añjali mudrā*, though according to temple custom, it may be proper to sit quietly or sing devotional hymns. After the *āratī*, or waving of the camphor light before the Deity, we prostrate (*ashṭāṅga praṇāma* for men, and *pañchāṅga praṇāma* for women) and rise to receive the *prasāda*, accepting them in the right hand. We walk around the *garbhagriha* one final time before taking our leave. The *Vedas* affirm, "If a man first takes firm hold on faith and then offers his sacrifice, then in that man's sacrifice both Gods and men place confidence." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Occurs Within the Śiva Temple?

### ŚLOKA 105

Activities within a Śiva temple vary from the daily round of *pūjās* to the elaborate celebrations on annual festival days. Even amid large crowds, our worship is personal and individual, not congregational. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

Besides the daily round of *pūjās*, many other events take place within the temple: pilgrims offering vows, priests chanting the *Vedas*, processions, elephants giving blessings, garlands being woven, weddings or philosophical discourses in pillared halls, devotional singing, feedings for the impoverished, dance and cultural performances, ritual bath in the stone tank, meditation, religious instruction, and many festival-related events. Generally, there are seven times when *pūjās* are held: at five, six and nine in the morning, at noon, and at six, eight and ten in the evening. The outer worship is approaching God properly, presenting ourselves acceptably. It is to offer our love, our adoration and then to speak out our prayer, our petition. The inner worship is to enjoy God's presence and not rush away, to stay, to sit, to meditate awhile and bask in the *śakti*, endeavoring to realize the Self within. The *Vedas* say, "Come, come!" these radiant offerings invite the worshiper, conveying him thither on the rays of the sun, addressing him pleasantly with words of praise, 'This world of Brahman is yours in its purity, gained by your own good works.' Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

# Pūjā पूजा



## Temple Rites

Offerings of perfumed substances, flowers, incense, lamps and fresh fruits—these are the five elements of the traditional *pūjā* which culminates with the offering of the lamps.

*Kāmika Āgama* 4.374. SA, 248

## What Is the Inner Importance of Pūjā?

ŚLOKA 106

The traditional rite of worship, called *pūjā*, is a sanctified act of the highest importance for the Hindu. It is the invoking of God Śiva and the Gods and the heartfelt expression of our love, devotion and surrender. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

*Pūjā* is a ceremony in which the ringing of bells, passing of flames, presenting of offerings and chanting invoke the *devas* and Mahādevas, who then come to bless and help us. *Pūjā* is our holy communion, full of wonder and tender affections. It is that part of our day which we share most closely and consciously with our beloved Deity; and thus it is for Śaivites the axis of religious life. Our worship through *pūjā*, outlined in the *Śaiva Āgamas*, may be an expression of festive celebration of important events in life, of adoration and thanksgiving, penance and confession, prayerful supplication and requests, or contemplation at the deepest levels of superconsciousness. *Pūjā* may be conducted on highly auspicious days in a most elaborate, orthodox and strict manner by the temple *pūjārīs*, or it may be offered in the simplest form each morning and evening in the home shrine by any devotee. The *Vedas* proclaim, "Sacrifice resembles a loom with threads extended this way and that, composed of innumerable rituals. Behold now the fathers weaving the fabric; seated on the outstretched loom. 'Lengthwise! Crosswise!' they cry." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Special Rite Called Archana?

ŚLOKA 107

*Archana* is an abbreviated form of temple *pūjā* in which the name, birth star and spiritual lineage of a devotee are intoned to the God by the priest to invoke special, individual, family or group blessings and assistance. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

If we wish to receive the Deity's blessing for something special that is happening in our life, we may request an *archana*. This is arranged and paid for within the temple itself. We give a basket or tray to the priest, or *pujārī*, upon which have been placed certain articles to be offered to the Deity: usually a flower garland, bananas and a coconut (carefully washed and not even breathed upon), holy ash, incense, camphor, rosewater and a contribution for the *pujārī*. The *pujārī* asks for our name, which we tell him aloud, and our *nakshatra*, or birth star. Then he asks for our *gotra*—the name of the *ṛishi* with which our family is associated. He then intones these, our credentials, before the Deity along with a Sanskrit verse. A brief *pūjā*, in which the 108 names of the God are chanted, is then performed specifically on our behalf and special blessings received. At the end, the *pujārī* will return most of the offerings as *prasāda*. The *Vedas* implore, “By your favors granted enable us, O Lord, once again to leap over the pitfalls that face us. Be a high tower, powerful and broad, for both us and our children. To our people bring well-being and peace.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Nature of Image Worship?

ŚLOKA 108

We worship God Śiva and the Gods who by their infinite powers spiritually hover over and indwell the image, or *mūrti*, which we revere as their temporary body. We commune with them through the ritual act of *pūjā*. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

The stone or metal Deity images are not mere symbols of the Gods; they are the form through which their love, power and blessings flood forth into this world. We may liken this mystery to our ability to communicate with others through the telephone. We do not talk to the telephone; rather we use a telephone as a means of communication with another person who is perhaps thousands of miles away. Without the telephone, we could not converse across such distances; and without the sanctified *mūrti* in the temple or shrine we cannot easily commune with the Deity. His vibration and presence can be felt in the image, and He can use the image as a temporary physical-plane body or channel. As we progress in our worship, we begin to adore the image as the Deity's physical body, for we know that He is actually present and conscious in it during *pūjā*, aware of our thoughts and feelings and even sensing the *pūjārī*'s gentle touch on the metal or stone. The *Vedas* exclaim, "Come down to us, Rudra, who art in the high mountains. Come and let the light of thy face, free from fear and evil, shine upon us. Come to us with thy love." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.



## Who Are the Priests of Śiva Temples?

ŚLOKA 109

Ādiśaiva priests are the hereditary *pujārīs* who care for the temple and conduct its varied rites and rituals as humble servants of God. They are trained in the complex arts of worship, generally from a young age. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Every temple has its own staff of priests. Some temples appoint only one, while others have a large extended family of priests to take care of the many shrines and elaborate festivals. Most are well trained from early childhood in the intricate liturgy. Śiva temple *pujārīs* are usually *brāhmins* from the Ādiśaiva lineage, though in certain temples they are not. These men of God must be fully knowledgeable of the metaphysical and ontological tenets of the religion and learn hundreds of *mantras* and chants required in the ritual worship. When fully trained, they are duly ordained as Śivāchāryas to perform *parārtha pūjā* in a consecrated Śiva temple. Generally, *pujārīs* do not attend to the personal problems of devotees. They are God's servants, tending His temple home and its related duties, never standing between the devotee and God. Officiating priests are almost always married men, while their assistants may be *brahmachārīs* or widowers. The Āgamas explain, "Only a well-qualified priest may perform both *ātmārtha pūjā*, worship for one's self, and *parārtha pūjā*, worship for others. Such an Ādiśaiva is a Śaiva *brāhmin* and a teacher." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Does the Pujārī Do During Pūjā?

ŚLOKA 110

During the *pūjā*, through *mantras*, *mudrās* and mystical ritual, the priest invokes the Deity. All observances are precisely detailed in the *Āgamas*; every act, every intoned syllable is rich in esoteric meaning. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

BHĀSHYA

The *pujārī* performs strict ablutions and disciplines to prepare himself for his sacred duty. Before the *pūjā*, he ritually purifies the atmosphere. As the *pūjā* begins, he meditates on Lord Gaṇeśa, praying that all obstacles may be removed. He then beseeches the God to indwell the image, to accept the prayers of the votaries, and to shower blessings and love on all. Calling the name of the Deity and chanting *mantras* and hymns from the *Vedas* and *Āgamas*, the *pujārī* makes offerings of unbroken rice, burning camphor, incense, holy ash, water, red turmeric powder, flowers and food. Sometimes offerings of milk, rosewater, sandalwood paste and yogurt are poured over the *mūrti* as an oblation, called *abhisheka*. Bells are loudly rung, conch shells sounded, and musicians may play the temple drums and woodwinds. The *pujārī* treats the Deity with utmost care, attending to Him as the King of kings. When the *pūjā* has ended, the *pujārī* passes the now sanctified offerings to those present. The *Vedas* state, “Daily the sacrifice is spread. Daily the sacrifice is completed. Daily it unites the worshiper to heaven. Daily by sacrifice to heaven he ascends.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Bhakti भक्ति:



## Love of God

They labor hard and gather flowers and carry water pure. They adore the Lord in unfailing piety and at His shining Feet lay flowers and stand and pray, and, unto the rain-laden clouds, forever prosperous shall they be.

*Tirumantiram 1839. TM*

## Is Temple Worship Only for Beginners?

ŚLOKA 111

Temple worship is for all men and women at every level of spiritual development. Its meaning and experience deepen as we unfold spiritually through the stages of service, devotion, *yoga* and enlightened wisdom. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

We never outgrow temple worship. It simply becomes more profound and meaningful as we progress through four spiritual levels. In the *charyā pāda*, the stage of selfless service, we attend the temple because we have to, because it is expected of us. In the *kriyā pāda*, the stage of worshipful *sādhanas*, we attend because we want to; our love of God is the motivation. In the *yoga pāda*, we worship God internally, in the sanctum of the heart; yet even the *yogī* immersed in the superconscious depths of mind has not outgrown the temple. It is there—God’s home on the Earth plane—when the *yogī* returns to normal consciousness. So perfect is the temple worship of those who have traversed the *jñāna pāda* that they themselves become worship’s object—living, moving temples. Yea, temple worship is never outgrown. The *Vedas* give praise, “Homage to Him who presides over all things, that which was and that which shall be; to whom alone belongs the heaven, to that all-powerful Brahman be homage! From Fullness He pours forth the full; the full spreads, merging with the full. We eagerly would know from whence He thus replenishes Himself.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## How Do Devotees Prepare for Worship?

ŚLOKA 112

We visit a Śiva temple after bathing, dressing in clean clothes and preparing an offering, which can be as simple as a few flowers or fruits. We bring the mind to the holy feet of the Deity even as preparations begin. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Visiting the home of God Śiva or of a God, the temple, is not without its trepidation, protocol and proper conduct, preceded by preparation that we administrate ourselves. Our worship is only as meaningful and effective as we make it. Before we attend or conduct a *pūjā*, we should carefully bathe the body, rinse the mouth and dress in fresh clothing—*sārīs* for women and *dhotīs* or *veshtis* and shawls for men where this is the custom. Throughout these preparations we may sing hymns or chant *mantras* or God's holy names silently or aloud, taking care to keep the mind free from worldly matters. We then gather offerings for the Deity. If mealtime is near, we eat only after *pūjā* has been concluded. Although the outer details of our worship are important, it is our inner feelings and thoughts, our love and devotion, which are the truest offering we can make. The *Vedas* testify, "The Gods, led by the spirit, honor faith in their worship. Faith is composed of the heart's intention. Light comes through faith. Through faith men come to prayer, faith in the morning, faith at noon and at the setting of the sun. O faith, give us faith!" Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## How Do Our Prayers Reach the Gods?

ŚLOKA 113

Through temple worship, the three worlds become open to one another, and the beings within them are able to communicate. By means of the mystical arts of *pūjā*, the worlds act in concert, and prayers are received. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

The three worlds are connected when *pūjā* is performed and worship is begun. There are certain rites that can be performed to enable individuals to communicate directly with beings in the inner worlds. Prayers are given and received in many ways. Among the most intimate, personal forms of communication is the written prayer to the *devas* or to God. Burned in Agni's sacred fire, it disintegrates in the physical world and quickly re-forms in the astral world. When a prayer is burned in a temple wherein this practice is consecrated, its astral image is received and read by the *devas*, and properly dispatched and answered, within the confines of our *karmic* pattern. Prayers may also be conveyed by slowly, mentally enunciating the words, visualizing them rising up the spine, through the top of the head, reaching beyond to the feet of God. The *devas* will not intervene unless asked. This is the inner law. The *Vedas* avow, "He shines forth at dawn like the sunlight, deploying the sacrifice in the manner of priests unfolding their prayerful thoughts. Agni, the God who knows well all the generations, visits the Gods as a messenger, most efficacious." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Do Śaivites Worship Only in Temples?

ŚLOKA 114

One can worship God anywhere and be in contact with the inner worlds—in the temple, in the home shrine and in the *yogī*'s contemplation. However, in the holy Śiva temple the three worlds most perfectly commune. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

In the shrine room gather messengers of the Mahādeva being worshiped to hear the prayers of the devotee and carry them to their Master. The Gods can be worshiped anywhere when the proper *saṅkalpa*, preparation, has been performed. God's presence is everywhere, through everything, in everything, for Śiva is the creator of all things, the manifestor of time, form and the space between forms. Śiva is worshiped in the mind, in the heart, through the throat, in the head of the *yogī* locked in *yoga*. So great is the power of worship, communion and communication with the centillion *devas*, that when a little bell is rung, a flame appears in the lamp, the vermilion spot is placed, the flower appears and is offered, God Śiva and the Gods are invoked. Contemplating the aftermath of *pūjā* or *abhisheka*, we feel the *sānnidhya* or divine presence of Parāśakti, tender motherly love, permeating to the outer walls around the temple. The *Vedas* proclaim, "Assemble all, with prayer to the Lord of Heaven, He is the One, the all-pervading, the guest of men. He, the ancient of days, abides in the present. Him, the One, the many follow on their path." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Home Shrine's Significance?

ŚLOKA 115

Every Śaivite maintains a home shrine. It is the most beautiful room in the house, an extension of the temple, the abode for Deities and *devas*, and a holy refuge for daily worship and meditation. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

BHĀSHYA

Every Śaivite home centers around the home shrine, a special room set aside and maintained to create a temple-like atmosphere in which we conduct *pūjā*, read scripture, perform *sādhana*, meditate, sing *bhajana* and do *japa*. Here the presence of the Gods is always felt, and we remember them especially morning and evening and before meals, which we offer to them before we partake. Worship traditionally begins before dawn, with the simple act of dedication for the coming day. After a bath, morning *pūjā* is performed which includes the repetition of the Gāyatrī or other *mantras* and is followed by *sādhana*s given by one's *guru*. The form of home worship, *ātmārtha pūjā*, is simple: the Deities are invoked and offerings are made. After the final *ārati*, or offering of the light, we supplicate them to bestow their grace on us, our family and all devotees. Evening devotionals include a simple *ārati*, *bhajana*, meditation and reading of scripture, which carries one to lofty celestial realms during sleep. The *Āgamas* affirm, "Worship of one's chosen Liṅga by anyone in their own home for divine protection is called *ātmārtha pūjā*." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.



## Sannyāsa Dharmah संन्यासधर्मः



### Monastic Life

Having transcended the desire for sons, the desire for wealth, the desire for worlds, they go about as mendicants. For the desire for sons is the desire for wealth, and the desire for wealth is the desire for worlds. All these are nothing but desires. He, the ātman, is not this, not this.

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Bṛihadāranyaka  
Upanishad 4.4.22. VE, 717*

## What Is the Hindu Monastic Tradition?

ŚLOKA 116

In the Hindu tradition there have always existed among men a few for whom the world held no attraction and *karmas* were on the wane. Some are solitary mendicants. Others reside with their brothers in monasteries. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Certain men are by nature inclined toward realization of the Self, and disinclined toward desires of family, wealth and property. Some among them are *sādhus* dressed in white. They are anchorites living in the seclusion of distant caves and remote forests or wandering as homeless mendicants, itinerant pilgrims to the holy sanctuaries of Hinduism. Others dwell as cenobites assembled with fellow monastics, often in the *āśrama*, *aadheenam* or *maṭha* of their *satguru*. These monks, both anchorite and cenobite, may live with no formal vows or take certain simple vows. When initiated into the order of *sannyāsa*, they don the saffron robes and bind themselves to a universal body of Hindu renunciates whose existence has never ceased. Scriptural doctrine states that the two paths, householder and renunciate, are distinct in their *dharma*s and attainments, affirming that true renunciation may not be achieved by those in the world even by virtue of a genuine attitude of detachment. The holy *Vedas* declare, “The man who has found Him becomes a silent monk. Desiring Him alone as their world, ascetics leave their homes and wander about.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Are the Goals of Renunciate Life?

ŚLOKA 117

The two fundamental objectives of *sannyāsa* are to promote the spiritual progress of the individual, bringing him into God Realization, and to protect and perpetuate the religion through his illumined leadership. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Renunciation and asceticism have been an integral component of Vedic culture from the earliest days, the most highly esteemed path of the Hindu Dharma. Monastic life has both an individual and a universal objective. At the individual level, it is a life of selflessness in which the monastic has made the supreme sacrifice of renouncing all personal ambition, all involvement in worldly matters, that he might direct his consciousness and energies fully toward God Śiva. Guided by the *satguru* along the *sādhana mārga*, the initiated *sannyāsin* unfolds through the years into deeper and deeper realizations. Ultimately, if he persists, he comes into direct knowing of Paraśiva, Transcendent Reality. At the universal level, Hindu monasticism fosters the religion by preserving the truths of the Sanātana Dharma. Competent *swāmīs* are the teachers, the theologians, the exemplars of their faith, the torchbearers lighting the way for all. The ancient *Vedas* elucidate, “The ascetic who wears discolored robes, whose head is shaved, who does not possess anything, who is pure and free from hatred, who lives on alms, he becomes absorbed in Brahman.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Sannyāsin's Kuṇḍalinī Path?

ŚLOKA 118

The *sannyāsin* balances within himself both the male and female energies. Complete unto himself, he is whole and independent. Having attained an equilibrium of *iḍā* and *piṅgalā*, he becomes a knower of the known. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

There arises within the *sannyāsin* a pure energy, neither masculine nor feminine. This is the *sushumṇā* current coming into power through which he gains control of the *kuṇḍalinī* force and eventually, after years of careful guidance, attains *nirvikalpa samādhi*. Eventually, in one life or another, all will turn to the renunciate path. However, it would be equally improper for a renunciate-minded soul to enter family life as for a householder to seek to be a *sannyāsin*. A word of warning. Be cautious of those who promise great *kuṇḍalinī* awakenings and spiritual rewards from severe practices without preparation, initiation and renunciation. Those entering the serious life of *sannyāsa* must be prepared to follow the traditional path of unrewarded *sādhana* through the years, apart from dear family and friends. Such is the way to reach the truth of *yoga*. It takes many, many years for the soul to thus ripen and mature. The *Tirumantiram* affirms, "Many are the births and deaths forgotten by souls shrouded in ignorance, enveloped in *mala's* darkness. At the moment Great Śiva's grace is gained, the renunciate attains the splendorous light." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Sannyāsin's Initiation Rite?

ŚLOKA 119

Young, unmarried men of the Hindu religion may qualify for renunciation, called *sannyāsa dīkshā*, which may be conferred by any legitimate *sannyāsin*. But the most spiritually potent initiation comes from a *satguru*. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Traditionally, *sannyāsa dīkshā* is restricted to unmarried men, though some modern orders have accepted qualified women. As a rule in most orders, if a candidate enters monastic training before age twenty-five and meets other qualifications, he may, generally after a minimum of twelve years of preparation and training, take the *sannyāsin's* lifetime vows, called holy orders of *sannyāsa*. Only a *sannyāsin* can bring another into the ancient order of *sannyāsa*. However, since the purpose is God Realization, most candidates seek initiation from a spiritually advanced knower of God who can bring them into Paraśiva. *Sannyāsa dīkshā* is given in simple or most formal ways. The formal rites include the shaving of the head, conveyance of certain esoteric teachings, abjuration of the worldly life and *dharma*, administration of monastic vows, conducting of the novice's funeral rites and the giving of the *kavi* vestments. The *Vedas* proclaim, "The Self within the body, pure and resplendent, is attained through the cultivation of truth, austerity, right knowledge and chastity. When their impurities dwindle, the ascetics behold Him." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Are the Holy Orders of Sannyāsa?

ŚLOKA 120

The holy orders of *sannyāsa* are lifetime vows of poverty, obedience and chastity, never to be relinquished or rescinded. The *sannyāsins* are the religious leaders, the bedrock of the Sanātana Dharma. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

BHĀSHYA

The *sannyāsin's* first sacred vow is renunciation, the surrendering of the limited identity of the ego that the soul may soar to the depths of impersonal Being. It is a repudiation of worldly *dharma* and involvement, and thus includes poverty and simplicity. The *sannyāsin* owns nothing, not even the robes he is given to wear. The second vow is obedience—a pledge to follow the traditional ways of the *sannyāsa dharma* and the specific directions of his *satguru*. It embraces obedience to his own conscience, to scripture, to God and the Gods and to his illustrious *guru paramparā*. The third vow is purity—a pledge to remain pure in thought, word and deed, to be continent throughout life, to protect the mind from all lower instincts: deceit, hatred, fear, jealousy, anger, pride, lust, covetousness and so forth. It includes the observance of *ahimsā*, noninjuriousness, and adherence to a vegetarian diet. Some orders also give vows of humility and confidentiality. The *Vedas* elucidate, “Henceforth being pure, clean, void, tranquil, breathless, selfless, endless, undecaying, steadfast, eternal, unborn, independent, he abides in his own greatness.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

# Jñānī ज्ञानी



## Knowers of God

Purified, empty, peaceful, breathless, selfless, infinite, indestructible, stable, eternal, unborn, free, he is established in his own glory. Having seen the Self who is established in His own glory, he looks upon the wheel of life as a wheel that rolls on.

*Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda, Maitrī Upanishad 6.28. VE, 440*

## Who Are Hinduism's Spiritual Leaders?

ŚLOKA 121

The saints, sages and *satgurus* who commune with God and Gods through devotion and meditation are Hinduism's holy men and women. We revere them and strive to follow their example and words of wisdom. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

There are and have always been many holy men and women within the Sanātana Dharma. They are considered holy because of their loving surrender to God and the Gods, their dedication to our faith, their accomplishments and profound realizations. Their knowing is more important than their learning, their purity more essential than their position. It is very difficult to be so disciplined and devoted, and so we honor and love those who have attained God's grace, and worship the divine within them, not their personality or humanness. Because of Hinduism's great diversity and decentralized organization, holy ones are not universally canonized, for there is no single ecclesiastical hierarchy to do this. Still, saints, sages and *satgurus* are sanctified by followers within their own *sampradāya*. Each within his or her own sphere of devotees is the authority on religious matters, listened to and obeyed as such. The *Vedas* declare, "Not understanding, and yet desirous to do so, I ask the wise who know, myself not knowing: 'Who may He be, the One in the form of the Unborn, who props in their place the six universal regions?'" Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.



## What Is a Saint, a Sage and a Satguru?

ŚLOKA 122

Saints, devoid of ego, reflect the peace, humility and purity of a devout life. Sages, though perfectly liberated, may outwardly appear detached and ordinary. *Satgurus*, also fully enlightened, guide others on the path. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

The saints, or *sants*, of Hinduism are honored as exemplars of our faith. Often living the householder *dharma*, they teach us how to act and how to serve the Gods. The purity of the saint's heart is evident in his or her words and deportment. There are others in our religion who are inwardly pure and awakened, but who do not outwardly display their attainment. These are known as sages and often live as secluded *munis* or wander as homeless mendicants, remaining aloof from the world. *Satgurus* are the masterful guides and mystical awakeners who bring us into the fullness of spiritual life. They are initiated *swāmīs* of recognized spiritual lineages. Sages and *satgurus* are the most honored among holy men, beings of the highest attainment. Both are unmarried renunciates. Sages are generally *nirvāṇīs*, reposing within their realization; *satgurus* are *upadeśīs*, actively guiding others to Truth. The *Vedas* offer this praise, "We celebrate with dedicated acts the greatness of the illustrious supermen amidst enlightened persons, who are pure, most wise, thought-inspirers, and who enjoy both kinds of our oblations—physical and spiritual." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Are There Other Terms for Holy Ones?

### ŚLOKA 123

Many terms name Hindu masters, teachers and aspirants including: *jīvanmukta*, *ṛishi*, *muni*, *siddha*, *mahātma*, *guru*, *swāmī*, *sannyāsin*, *tapasvin*, *yogī*, *sādhū*, *sādhaka*, *paṇḍita*, *āchārya*, *śāstrī*, *pujārī*, *śishya* and *brahmachārī*. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

A *jīvanmukta* is a liberated soul. *Ṛishi* refers to a venerated sage or seer. A *muni* is an ecstatic mystic, especially one living in seclusion or vowed to silence. *Siddha* refers to a perfected being or one who has attained magical powers. *Mahātma* denotes a great soul or renowned *guru*. The term *guru* usually describes a spiritual master, but can connote a teacher of any subject. A *sannyāsin*, or *swāmī*, is a formally ordained renunciate monk. A *tapasvin* is an ascetic seeking purification through rigorous disciplines. The *yogī* is dedicated to intense meditation for inner attainment. *Sādhū* is a general term for a holy man or wandering mendicant. A *sādhaka* is a serious seeker of the Self, and is often a monk. The *āchārya*, like the *paṇḍita*, is a respected teacher and advisor. *Śāstrī* refers to an expert in scripture. A *pujārī* is a temple priest. A *śishya* is a formal disciple. A *brahmachārī* is a celibate student, often under simple vows. Some titles have feminine equivalents, such as *sādhvī*, *yoginī* and *brahmachārīnī*. The *Vedas* explain, “The *brahmachārī* moves, strengthening both the worlds. In him the *devas* meet in concord; he upholds Earth and Heaven.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Nature of Guru Protocol?

ŚLOKA 124

*Guru* protocol, as outlined in the *Kulārṇava Tantra* and *Guru Gītā*, defines the traditional ways of relating to one's spiritual preceptor to draw forth his wisdom and blessings and fully understand his inner nature. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

*Guru* protocol can be understood in three parts: devotional acts, codes of harmony and prohibitions. Devotional acts include serving the *guru*, prostrating daily and offering a gift in love, chanting his name and meditating on his inner form as the embodiment of the Divine, partaking of *uc̥chishṭa*—waters from his holy sandals, and his food leavings—emulating his awakened qualities, seeking initiation and striving for Self Realization as he directs. Codes of harmony include seeking his blessings, obeying his directions, keeping no secrets and honoring his lofty presence. Prohibitions include never contradicting or arguing with the *guru*, never criticizing him, nor listening to criticism by others, not imitating his dress or deportment, not standing or sitting above him, nor walking or driving ahead of him; not assuming authority in his presence, nor uttering words of falsehood or contempt, and not initiating conversation or asking questions unless invited. The *Kulārṇava Tantra* explains, “Be always in service of the *guru*, ever in his presence, giving up desire and anger, humble and devoted, lauding in spirit, upright in doing his work.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Satguru's Unique Function?

ŚLOKA 125

To transcend the mind and reach the ultimate goal, seekers need the guidance of a *satguru*, an enlightened master who has followed the path to its natural end and can lead them to the Divine within themselves. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

BHĀSHYA

The *satguru* is the devotee's spiritual guide and preceptor, friend and companion on the path. Having become religion's consummation, the *satguru* can see where others are and know what their next step should be. Nothing is more precious than the first soul-quickenings, life-changing *śaktipāta* from a *guru*. Nothing is more central to spiritual awakening than the progressive *dīkshās*, or initiations, he bestows. A *satguru* is needed because the mind is so cunning and the ego is a self-perpetuating mechanism. It is he who inspires, assists, guides and impels the *śishya* toward the Self of himself. The *satguru*, perfected in his relationship with Śiva, administers the *sādhana* and *tapas* that slowly incinerate the seeds of *sañchita karmas*. It is his task to preside over the annihilation of the *śishya's* ego and subconscious dross, all the while guiding the awakened *kuṇḍalinī* force so that safe, steady progress can be made from stage to stage. The *Āgamas* affirm, "Individuals who become, by the grace of Śiva, eager to extricate themselves from worldly fetters, obtain initiation from a competent preceptor into the path that leads to Śivasāyujya." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

# Śrutih श्रुतिः



## Revealed Scripture

As when a fire is lit with damp fuel, different clouds of smoke come forth, in the same way from this great Being are breathed forth the *Ṛig Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sāma Veda*, *Atharva Veda*.

*Śukla Yajur Veda*, *Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad* 2.4.10. VE, 691

## What Are Hindu Revealed Scriptures?

ŚLOKA 126

The *Vedas* and *Āgamas*, revealed by God, are Hinduism's sovereign scriptures, called *śruti*, "that which is heard." Their timeless truths are expressed in the most extraordinarily profound mystical poetry known to man. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

*Veda*, from *vid*, "to know," means "supreme wisdom or science." Similarly, *Āgama*, which names the sacred sectarian revelations, means "descent of knowledge." The *Vedas* and *Āgamas* are eternal truths transmitted by God through great clairaudient and clairvoyant *rishis*. They are Hinduism's primary and most authoritative scriptures, expounding life's sacredness and man's purpose on the planet. These psalms of wisdom were disclosed over many centuries, memorized and orally conveyed from generation to generation within priestly families, then finally written down in Sanskrit in the last few millennia. The subtly symbolic language of *śruti*, the cherished word of God, is lyrical and lofty. In imparting religious practice, rules and doctrine, the *Vedas* are general and the *Āgamas* specific. The *Vedas* extol and invoke a multiplicity of Gods through elaborate fire rituals called *yajña*. The *Āgamas* center around a single Deity and His worship with water, flowers and lights in sanctified temples and shrines. The *Tirumantiram* lauds, "Two are the scriptures that Lord Śiva revealed—the primal *Vedas* and the perfect *Āgamas*." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Nature of the *Veda* Texts?

ŚLOKA 127

The holy *Vedas*, man's oldest scripture, dating back **6,000** to **8,000** years, are a collection of four books: the *Rig*, *Sāma*, *Yajur* and *Atharva*. Each has four sections: hymns, rites, interpretation and philosophical instruction. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

The oldest and core portions of the *Vedas* are the four *Samhitās*, “hymn collections.” They consist of invocations to the One Divine and the Divinities of nature, such as the Sun, the Rain, the Wind, the Fire and the Dawn—as well as prayers for matrimony, progeny, prosperity, concord, domestic rites, formulas for magic, and more. They are composed in beautiful metrical verses, generally of three or four lines. The heart of the entire *Veda* is the 10,552-verse *Rig Samhitā*. The *Sāma* and *Yajur Samhitās*, each with about 2,000 verses, are mainly liturgical selections from the *Rig*; whereas most of the *Atharva Samhitā*'s nearly 6,000 verses of prayers, charms and rites are unique. The *Sāma* is arranged for melodious chanting, the *Yajur* for cadenced intonation. Besides its *Samhitā*, each *Veda* includes one or two *Brāhmaṇas*, ceremonial handbooks, and *Āraṇyakas*, ritual interpretations, plus many inestimable *Upanishads*, metaphysical dialogs. In all there are over 100,000 Vedic verses, and some prose, in dozens of texts. The *Tirumantiram* confirms, “There is no *dharma* other than what the *Vedas* say. *Dharma*'s central core the *Vedas* proclaim.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## How Are the *Vedas* Significant Today?

ŚLOKA 128

The *Vedas*, the ultimate scriptural authority, permeate Hinduism's thought, ritual and meditation. They open a rare window into ancient Bharata society, proclaiming life's sacredness and the way to oneness with God. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Like the Taoist *Tao te Ching*, the Buddhist *Dhammapada*, the Sikh *Ādi Granth*, the Jewish *Torah*, the Christian *Bible* and the Muslim *Koran*—the *Veda* is the Hindu holy book. For untold centuries unto today, it has remained the sustaining force and authoritative doctrine, guiding followers in ways of worship, duty and enlightenment—*upāsanā*, *dharma* and *jñāna*. The *Vedas* are the meditative and philosophical focus for millions of monks and a billion seekers. Their stanzas are chanted from memory by priests and laymen daily as liturgy in temple worship and domestic ritual. All Hindus wholeheartedly accept the *Vedas*, yet each draws selectively, interprets freely and amplifies abundantly. Over time, this tolerant allegiance has woven the varied tapestry of Bharata Dharma. Today the *Vedas* are published in Sanskrit, English, French, German and other languages. But it is the metaphysical and popular *Upanishads* which have been most amply and ably translated. The *Vedas* say, “Just as the spokes are affixed to the hub of a wheel, so are all things established in life, the *Ṛig* and *Yajur* and *Sāma Veda*, sacrifice, the nobility and also the priesthood.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.



## What Is the Nature of the Holy *Āgamas*?

ŚLOKA 129

The *Āgamas*, Sanātana Dharma's second authority, are revelations on sacred living, worship, *yoga* and philosophy. Śaivism, Śāktism and Vaishṇavism each exalts its own array of *Āgamas*, many over **2,000** years old. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

In the vast Āgamic literature, tradition counts 92 main *Śaiva Āgamas*—10 Śiva, 18 Rudra and 64 Bhairava—77 *Śākta Āgamas* and 108 *Vaishṇava Pañcharātra Āgamas*. Most *Āgamas* are of four parts, called *pādas*, and possess thousands of metered Sanskrit verses, usually of two lines. The *charyā pāda* details daily religious observance, right conduct, the *guru-śishya* relationship, community life, house design and town planning. The *kriyā pāda*, commonly the longest, extols worship and temples in meticulous detail—from site selection, architectural design and iconography, to rules for priests and the intricacies of daily *pūjā*, annual festivals and home-shrine devotionals. The *yoga pāda* discloses the interior way of meditation, of *rāja yoga*, *mantra* and *tantra* which stimulates the awakening of the slumbering serpent, *kuṇḍalinī*. The *jñāna pāda* narrates the nature of God, soul and world, and the means for liberation. The *Tirumantiram* declares, “*Veda* and *Āgama* are Iraivan's scriptures. Both are truth: one is general, the other specific. While some say these words of God reach two different conclusions, the wise see no difference.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## How Are the *Āgamas* Significant Today?

ŚLOKA 130

While the *Vedas*, with myriad Deities, bind all Hindus together, the *Āgamas*, with a single supreme God, unify each sect in a oneness of thought, instilling in adherents the joyful arts of divine adoration. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

BHĀSHYA

God is love, and to love God is the pure path prescribed in the *Āgamas*. Veritably, these texts are God's own voice admonishing the *saṁsārī*, reincarnation's wanderer, to give up love of the transient and adore instead the Immortal. How to love the Divine, when and where, with what *mantras* and visualizations and at what auspicious times, all this is preserved in the *Āgamas*. The specific doctrines and practices of day-to-day Hinduism are nowhere more fully expounded than in these revelation hymns, delineating everything from daily work routines to astrology and cosmology. So overwhelming is Āgamic influence in the lives of most Hindus, particularly in temple liturgy and culture, that it is impossible to ponder modern Sanātana Dharma without these discourses. While many *Āgamas* have been published, most remain inaccessible, protected by families and guilds who are stewards of an intimate hereditary knowledge. The *Tirumantiram* says, "Nine are the *Āgamas* of yore, in time expanded into twenty-eight, they then took divisions three, into one truth of Vedānta-Siddhānta to accord. That is Śuddha Śaiva, rare and precious." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Smṛitiḥ स्मृतिः



## Secondary Scripture

The Word, in fact, makes known the *Ṛig Veda*, the *Yajur Veda*, the *Sāma Veda*, the *Atharva Veda* as the fourth, and the ancient lore as the fifth: the *Veda of Vedas*—the ritual for ancestors, calculus, the augural sciences, the knowledge of the signs of the times, ethics, political science, sacred knowledge, theology, knowledge of the spirits, military science, astrology, the science of snakes and of celestial beings.

*Sāma Veda, Çhandogya Upanishad 7.2.1. VE, 111*

## Do Smṛiti and Sacred Literature Differ?

ŚLOKA 131

Hindu sacred literature is a treasury of hymns, legend, mythology, philosophy, science and ethics. From among this vast body of writings, each lineage recognizes a select portion as its secondary scripture, called *smṛiti*. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

While the *Vedas* and *Āgamas* are shared as part of every Hindu's primary scripture, *śruti*, each sect and lineage defines its own unique set of *smṛiti*. The sacred literature, *punya śāstra*, from which *smṛiti* is drawn consists of writings, both ancient and modern, in many languages. Especially central are the ancient Sanskritic texts, such as the *Itihāsas*, *Purāṇas* and *Dharma Śāstras*, which are widely termed the classical *smṛiti*. In reality, while many revere these as *smṛiti*, others regard them only as sacred literature. *Smṛiti* means "that which is remembered" and is known as "the tradition," for it derives from human insight and experience and preserves the course of culture. While *śruti* comes from God and is eternal and universal, the ever-growing *smṛiti* canon is written by man. Hinduism's sacred literature is the touchstone of theater and dance, music, song and pageantry, *yoga* and *sādhana*, metaphysics and ethics, exquisite art and hallowed sciences. The *Vedas* inquire, "In whom are set firm the firstborn seers, the hymns, the songs and the sacrificial formulas, in whom is established the single seer—tell me of that support—who may He be?" Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Texts Amplify *Vedas* and *Āgamas*?

ŚLOKA 132

Many texts support the *Vedas* and *Āgamas*. *Vedāṅgas* detail conduct, astrology, language and etymology. *Upavedas* unfold politics, health, warfare and music. *Upāgamas* and *Paddhatis* elaborate the Āgamic wisdom. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Much of Hinduism's practical knowledge is safeguarded in venerable texts which amplify *śruti*. The *Vedāṅgas* and *Upavedas* are collections of texts that augment and apply the *Vedas* as a comprehensive system of sacred living. *Jyotisha Vedāṅga* delineates auspicious timing for holy rites. *Kalpa Vedāṅga* defines public rituals in the *Śrauta* and *Śulba Sūtras*, domestic rites in the *Gṛihya Sūtras* and religious law in the *Dharma Śāstras*. Four other *Vedāṅgas* ensure the purity of *mantra* recitation, through knowledge of phonetics, grammar, poetry and the way of words. The *Upavedas* expound profound sciences: *Arthaveda* unfolds statecraft; *Āyurveda* sets forth medicine and health; *Dhanurveda* discusses military science; *Gāndharvaveda* illumines music and the arts; and *Sthāpatyaveda* explains architecture. In addition, the *Kāma Sūtras* detail erotic pleasures. The *Āgamas*, too, have ancillary texts, such as the *Upāgamas* and *Paddhatis*, which elaborate the ancient wisdom. The *Jñāneśvarī* says, "The *Vedas* in their perfection are as the beautiful image of the God of which the flawless words are the resplendent body. The *smṛitis* are the limbs thereof." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Does Hinduism Have Epics and Myths?

ŚLOKA 133

The *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* are Hinduism's most renowned epic histories, called *Itihāsa*. The *Purāṇas* are popular folk narratives, teaching faith, belief and ethics in mythology, allegory, legend and symbolism. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Hinduism's poetic stories of *rishis*, Gods, heroes and demons are sung by gifted *paṇḍitas* and traveling bards, narrated to children and portrayed in dramas and festivals. The *Mahābhārata*, the world's longest epic poem, is the legend of two ancient dynasties whose great battle of Kurukshetra is the scene of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, the eloquent spiritual dialog between Arjuna and Kṛishṇa. The *Rāmāyaṇa* relates the life of Rāma, a heroic king revered as the ideal man. The *Purāṇas*, like the *Mahābhārata*, are encyclopedic in scope, containing teachings on *sādhana*, philosophy, *dharma*, ritual, language and the arts, architecture, agriculture, magic charms and more. Of eighteen principal *Purāṇas*, six honor God as Śiva, six as Viṣṇu and six as Brahmā. The witty *Pañchatantra*, eminent among the "story" literature, or *kathā*, portrays wisdom through animal fables and parables. The *Bhagavad Gītā* proclaims, "He who reads this sacred dialog of ours, by him I consider Myself worshiped through the sacrifice of knowledge. And the man who listens to it with faith and without scoffing, liberated, he shall attain to the happy realm of the righteous." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Are There Other Types of Sacred Texts?

ŚLOKA 134

India's lofty philosophical texts expound diverse views in exacting dialectics. *Yoga* treatises unveil the mysterious path to ultimate *samādhis*. Intimate devotional hymns disclose the raptures of consummate Divine love. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

In addition to the epics, legends and supplements to the *Vedas* and *Āgamas*, there is a wealth of Hindu metaphysical, *yogic* and devotional writings. Considered foundational are the early texts defining the six philosophical *darśanas*: the *sūtras* by Kapila, Patanjali, Jaimini, Badarayana, Kanada and Gautama. Hailed as leading occult works on *yoga*, *āsanas*, *nāḍīs*, *chakras*, *kuṇḍalinī* and *samādhi* are the *Yoga Sūtras*, *Tirumantiram*, *Yoga Vāsishṭha*, *Śiva Sūtras*, *Siddha Siddhānta Paddhati*, *Jñāneśvarī*, *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* and *Gheraṇḍa Saṁhitā*. Widely extolled among the *bhakti* literature are the *Bhagavad Gītā*, *Nārada Sūtras*, *Tiruvāsaṁgam*, the *Vachanas* of the Śivaśaraṇās and the hymns of mystic poets like Surdas, Tukaram, Ramprasad, Mirabai, Andal, Vallabha, Tulasidasa, Tayumanavar, Lalla, Tagore, Auvaiyar and the saintly Nayanars and Alvars. The *Bhagavad Gītā* explains, “As a blazing fire reduces the wood to ashes, O Arjuna, so does the fire of knowledge reduce all activity to ashes. There is nothing on Earth which possesses such power to cleanse as wisdom. The perfect *yogin* finds this knowledge in himself by himself in due time.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Source of This Catechism?

ŚLOKA 135

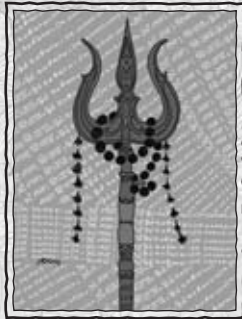
The philosophical basis of this catechism is the monistic Śaiva Siddhānta of the Kailāsa Paramparā as expressed in the *Vedas*, *Śaiva Āgamas*, *Tirukural*, *Tirumurai*, *Tirumantiram* and contemporary scripture. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

BHĀSHYA

This catechism, *praśnottaram*, is the creation of the living lineage of seers known as the Kailāsa Paramparā, of the South Indian Śaivite school called Śuddha Śaiva Siddhānta, Advaita Siddhānta or monistic Śaiva Siddhānta. It reflects the teachings of the *Vedas* and *Śaiva Āgamas*, the profound Tamil scriptures *Tirumurai* and *Tirukural* and the revelations of contemporary Kailāsa gurus. The *Tirumurai* is a twelve-book collection of hymns of numerous Śaivite saints. Most important among these is the *Tirumantiram*, a *siddha yoga* treatise by Rishi Tirumular, recording the Śaiva tenets in 3,047 verses. It is prized as the confluence of Siddhānta and Vedānta. The *Tirukural*, containing 1,330 couplets by the weaver saint Tiruvalluvar, is among the world's greatest ethical scriptures, sworn on in South Indian courts of law. *Natchintanai* are the sacred hymns of Sri Lanka's Sage Yogaswami. Tayumanavar says, "I meditate on the great light of the Siddhānta, the thought of all thoughts, the life of all life, which, existing in all objects without distinction, causes a spring of inestimably pure and happy nectar to flow for the good of its followers." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.



## Mantraḥ मंत्रः



## Affirmations of Faith

By means of the hymns one attains this world, by the sacrificial formulas the space in-between, by holy chant the world revealed by the sages. With the syllable *Aum* as his sole support, the wise man attains that which is peaceful, unaging, deathless, fearless—the Supreme.

*Atharva Veda, Praśna Upanishad 5.7. VE, 775*

## What Is the Holy Namaḥ Śivāya Mantra?

ŚLOKA 136

Namaḥ Śivāya is among the foremost Vedic *mantras*. It means “adoration to Śiva” and is called the Pañchākshara, or “five-letters.” Within its celestial tones and hues resides all of the intuitive knowledge of Śaivism. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Namaḥ Śivāya is the most holy name of God Śiva, recorded at the very center of the *Vedas* and elaborated in the *Śaiva Āgamas*. *Na* is the Lord’s concealing grace, *Ma* is the world, *Śi* stands for Śiva, *Vā* is His revealing grace, *Ya* is the soul. The five elements, too, are embodied in this ancient formula for invocation. *Na* is earth, *Ma* is water, *Śi* is fire, *Vā* is air, and *Ya* is ether, or *ākāśa*. Many are its meanings. Namaḥ Śivāya has such power, the mere intonation of these syllables reaps its own reward in salvaging the soul from bondages of the treacherous instinctive mind and the steel bands of a perfected externalized intellect. Namaḥ Śivāya quells the instinct, cuts through the steel bands and turns this intellect within and on itself, to face itself and see its ignorance. Sages declare that *mantra* is life, that *mantra* is action, that *mantra* is love and that the repetition of *mantra*, *japa*, bursts forth wisdom from within. The holy *Natchintanai* proclaims, “Namaḥ Śivāya is in truth both *Āgama* and *Veda*. Namaḥ Śivāya represents all *mantras* and *tantras*. Namaḥ Śivāya is our souls, our bodies and possessions. Namaḥ Śivāya has become our sure protection.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## How Is Namaḥ Śivāya Properly Chanted?

ŚLOKA 137

The Pañchākshara Mantra, Namaḥ Śivāya, is repeated verbally or mentally, often while counting a *mālā* of *rudrāksha* beads, drawing the mind in upon itself to cognize Lord Śiva's infinite, all-pervasive presence. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

*Japa yoga* is the first *yoga* to be performed toward the goal of *jñāna*. In the temple perform *japa*. Under your favorite tree perform *japa*. Seated in a remote cave perform *japa*. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya can be performed on *rudrāksha* beads over and over when the sun is setting, when the sun is rising or high noon lights the day. “Aum Namaḥ Śivāya,” the Śaivite chants. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya feeds his soul, brightens his intellect and quells his instinctive mind. Take the holy tears of Śiva, the auburn *rudrāksha* beads, into your hands. Push a bead over the middle finger with your thumb and hold as the intonation marks its passage. The duly initiated audibly repeats “Namaḥ Śivāya,” and when *japa* is performed silently, mentally chants “Śivāya Namaḥ.” There are many ways to chant this *mantra*, but perform it as you were initiated. Unauthorized experimentation is forbidden. Those prone to angry rage should never do *japa*. The *Tirumantiram* announces, “His feet are the letter *Na*. His navel is the letter *Ma*. His shoulders are the letter *Śi*. His mouth, the letter *Vā*. His radiant cranial center aloft is *Ya*. Thus is the five-lettered form of Śiva.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Is Initiation Necessary to Perform Japa?

ŚLOKA 138

The most precious of all Śaivite *mantras*, Namaḥ Śivāya is freely sung and chanted by one and all. *Mantra dīkshā* bestows the permission and power for *japa yoga*. Without this initiation, its repetition bears lesser fruit. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

The Pañchākshara Mantra is the word of God, the name and total essence of Śiva. But to chant Namaḥ Śivāya and to be empowered to chant Namaḥ Śivāya is likened to the difference between writing a check without money in the bank and writing a check with money in the bank. Namaḥ Śivāya is the gateway to *yoga*. Initiation from an orthodox *guru* is given after preparation, training and attaining a certain level of purity and dedication. The *guru* bestows the authority to chant Namaḥ Śivāya. After initiation, the devotee is obligated to intone it regularly as instructed. This forges the *śishya's* permanent bond with the *guru* and his spiritual lineage, *sampradāya*, and fires the process of inner unfoldment. From the lips of my Satgurunātha I learned Namaḥ Śivāya, and it has been the central core of my life, strength and fulfillment of destiny. The secret of Namaḥ Śivāya is to hear it from the right lips at the right time. Then, and only then, is it the most powerful *mantra* for you. The *Śiva Samhitā* affirms, “Only the knowledge imparted by a *guru*, through his lips, is powerful and useful; otherwise it becomes fruitless, weak and very painful.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is Śaivism's Affirmation of Faith?

ŚLOKA 139

The proclamation “God Śiva is Immanent Love and Transcendent Reality” is a potent affirmation of faith. Said in any of Earth's **3,000** languages, it summarizes the beliefs and doctrines of the Śaivite Hindu religion. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

An affirmation of faith is a terse, concise statement summarizing a complex philosophical tradition. “God Śiva is Immanent Love and Transcendent Reality,” is what we have when we take the milk from the sacred cow of Śaivism, separate out the cream, churn that cream to rich butter and boil that butter into a precious few drops of *ghee*. “God Śiva is Immanent Love and Transcendent Reality” is the sweet *ghee* of the Śaivite Hindu religion. In the Sanskrit language it is *Premaiva Śivamaya, Satyam eva Paraśivaḥ*. In the sweet Tamil language it is even more succinct and beautiful: *Anbe Sivamayam, Satyame Parasivam*. In French it is *Dieu Śiva est Amour Omniprésent et Réalité Transcendante*. We strengthen our mind with positive affirmations that record the impressions of the distilled and ultimate truths of our religion so that these memories fortify us in times of distress, worldliness or anxiety. The *Tirumantiram* proclaims, “Transcending all, yet immanent in each He stands. For those bound in the world here below, He is the great treasure. Himself the Parapara Supreme, for all worlds He gave the way that His greatness extends.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## How Is the Affirmation of Faith Used?

### ŚLOKA 140

Intoning the affirmation of faith, we positively assert that God is both manifest and unmanifest, both permeating the world and transcending it, both personal Divine Love and impersonal Reality. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

On the lips of Śaivites throughout the world resounds the proclamation “God Śiva is Immanent Love and Transcendent Reality.” It is a statement of fact, a summation of truth, even more potent when intoned in one’s native language. “God Śiva is Immanent Love and Transcendent Reality,” we repeat prior to sleep. “God Śiva is Immanent Love and Transcendent Reality,” we say upon awakening as we recall the transcendent knowledge gained from the *ṛishis* during sleep. These sacred words we say as we bathe to prepare to face the day, God Śiva’s day, reminding ourselves that His immanent love protects us, guides us, lifting our mind into the arena of useful thoughts and keeping us from harm’s way. Devotees write this affirmation 1,008 times as a *sahasra lekhana sādhanā*. It may be spoken 108 times daily in any language before initiation into Namaḥ Śivāya. Yea, the recitation of this affirmation draws devotees into Śiva consciousness. The *Tirumantiram* says, “The ignorant prate that love and Śiva are two. They do not know that love alone is Śiva. When men know that love and Śiva are the same, love as Śiva they ever remain.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

# Advaita-Dvaitau अद्वैत-द्वैतौ



## Monism and Dualism

When the Great Being is seen as both the higher and the lower, then the knot of the heart is rent asunder, all doubts are dispelled and *karma* is destroyed.

*Atharva Veda, Muṇḍaka Upanishad 2.2.8. EH, 170*

## What Are the Many Hindu Philosophies?

ŚLOKA 141

From time immemorial, India's sages and philosophers have pondered the nature of reality. Out of their speculations have blossomed hundreds of schools of thought, all evolving from the rich soil of village Hinduism. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

At one end of Hinduism's complex spectrum is monism, *advaita*, which perceives a unity of God, soul and world, as in Sankara's acosmic pantheism and Kashmīr Śaiva monism. At the other end is dualism, *dvaita*—exemplified by Madhva and the early Pāśupatas—which teaches two or more separate realities. In between are views describing reality as one and yet not one, *dvaita-advaita*, such as Ramanuja's Vaishṇava Vedānta and Srikantha's Śaiva Viśiṣṭādvaita. Hindu philosophy consists of many schools of Vedic and Āgamic thought, including the six classical *darśanas*—Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta. Each theology expresses the quest for God and is influenced by the myth, mystery and cultural syncretism of contemporary, tribal, shamanic Hinduism alive in every village in every age. India also produced views, called *nāstika*, that reject the *Vedas* and are thus not part of Hinduism, such as Jainism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Chārvāka materialistic atheism. The *Vedas* state, "Theologians ask: What is the cause? Is it Brahmā? Whence are we born? Whereby do we live? And on what are we established?" Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.



## How Do Monism and Dualism Differ?

ŚLOKA 142

To most monists God is immanent, temporal, becoming. He is creation itself, material cause, but not efficient cause. To most dualists, God is transcendent, eternal, Creator—efficient cause but not material cause. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

To explain creation, philosophers speak of three kinds of causes: efficient, instrumental and material. These are likened to a potter's molding a pot from clay. The potter, who makes the process happen, is the *efficient cause*. The wheel he uses to spin and mold the pot is the *instrumental cause*, thought of as God's power, or *śakti*. The clay is the *material cause*. Theistic dualists believe in God as Lord and Creator, but He remains ever separate from man and the world and is not the material cause. Among the notable dualists have been Kapila, Madhva, Meykandar, Chaitanya, Aristotle, Augustine, Kant and virtually all Jewish, Christian and Muslim theologians. The most prevalent monism is pantheism, "all is God," and its views do not permit of a God who is Lord and Creator. He is immanent, temporal—material cause but not efficient cause. History's pantheists include Sankara, Vivekananda, Aurobindo, Plotinus, the Stoics, Spinoza and Asvaghosha. The *Vedas* proclaim, "As a thousand sparks from a fire well blazing spring forth, each one like the rest, so from the Imperishable all kinds of beings come forth, my dear, and to Him return." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Are Monism and Dualism Reconcilable?

ŚLOKA 143

Monists, from their mountaintop perspective, perceive a one reality in all things. Dualists, from the foothills, see God, souls and world as eternally separate. Monistic theism is the perfect reconciliation of these two views. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Visualize a mountain and the path leading to its icy summit. As the climber traverses the lower ranges, he sees the meadows, the passes, the giant boulders. This we can liken to dualism, the natural, theistic state where God and man are different. Reaching the summit, the climber sees that the many parts are actually a one mountain. This realization is likened to pure monism. Unfortunately, many monists, reaching the summit, teach a denial of the foothills they themselves climbed on the way to their monistic platform. However, by going a little higher, lifting the *kuṇḍalinī* into the space above the mountain's peak, the entire Truth is known. The bottom and the top are viewed as a one whole, just as theism and monism are accepted by the awakened soul. Monistic theism, Advaita Īśvaravāda, reconciles the dichotomy of being and becoming, the apparent contradiction of God's eternality and temporal activity, the confusion of good and evil, the impasse of one and two. The *Vedas* affirm, "He who knows this becomes a knower of the One and of duality, he who has attained to the oneness of the One, to the self-same nature." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the View of Monistic Theism?

ŚLOKA 144

Monistic theism is the synthesis of monism and dualism. It says God is transcendent and immanent, eternal and temporal, Being and becoming, Creator and created, Absolute and relative, efficient and material cause. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Both strict monism and dualism are fatally flawed, for neither alone encompasses the whole of truth. In other words, it is not a choice between the *God-is-man-and-world* view of pantheistic monism and the *God-is-separate-from-man-and-world* view of theistic dualism. It is both. *Panentheism*, which describes “all in God, and God in all,” and monistic theism are Western terms for Advaita Īśvaravāda. It is the view that embraces the oneness of God and soul, monism, and the reality of the Personal God, theism. As panentheists, we believe in an eternal oneness of God and man at the level of Satchidānanda and Paraśiva. But a difference is acknowledged during the evolution of the soul body. Ultimately, even this difference merges in identity. Thus, there is perfectly beginningless oneness and a temporary difference which resolves itself in perfect identity. In the acceptance of this identity, monistic theists differ from most *viśiṣṭādvaitins*. The *Vedas* declare, “He moves and He moves not; He is far, yet is near. He is within all that is, yet is also outside. The man who sees all beings in the Self and the Self in all beings is free from all fear.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Is Monistic Theism Found in the *Vedas*?

ŚLOKA 145

Again and again in the *Vedas* and from *satgurus* we hear “Ahaṁ Brahmāsmi,” “I am God,” and that God is both immanent and transcendent. Taken together, these are clear statements of monistic theism. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

BHĀSHYA

Monistic theism is the philosophy of the *Vedas*. Scholars have long noted that the Hindu scriptures are alternately monistic, describing the oneness of the individual soul and God, and theistic, describing the reality of the Personal God. One cannot read the *Vedas*, *Śaiva Āgamas* and hymns of the saints without being overwhelmed with theism as well as monism. Monistic theism is the essential teaching of Hinduism, of Śaivism. It is the conclusion of Tirumular, Vasugupta, Gorakshanatha, Bhaskara, Srikantha, Basavanna, Vallabha, Ramakrishna, Yogaswami, Nityananda, Radhakrishnan and thousands of others. It encompasses both Siddhānta and Vedānta. It says, God is and is in all things. It propounds the hopeful, glorious, exultant concept that every soul will finally merge with Śiva in undifferentiated oneness, none left to suffer forever because of human transgression. The *Vedas* wisely proclaim, “Higher and other than the world-tree, time and forms is He from whom this expanse proceeds—the bringer of *dharma*, the remover of evil, the lord of prosperity. Know Him as in one’s own Self, as the immortal abode of all.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

# Śaiva Siddhāntaḥ शैवसिद्धान्तः



## Views of Reality

Whoever has found and has awakened to the Self that has entered into this perilous inaccessible place, the body, he is the maker of the universe, for he is the maker of all. His is the world. Indeed, he is the world itself.

*Śukla Yajur Veda, Bṛihadāraṇyaka  
Upanishad 4.4.13. UPR, 276*

## What Are Śaiva Siddhānta's Two Schools?

ŚLOKA 146

There are two Śaiva Siddhānta schools: pluralistic theism, in the lines of Aghorasiva and Meykandar, and Tirumular's monistic theism. While differing slightly, they share a religious heritage of belief, culture and practice. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Here we compare the monistic Siddhānta of Rishi Tirumular that this catechism embodies and the pluralistic realism expounded by Meykandar and his disciples. They share far more in common than they hold in difference. In South India, their points of agreement are summarized as *guru*, preceptor; *Liṅga*, holy image of Śiva; *saṅga*, fellowship of devotees; and *valipadu*, ritual worship. Both agree that God Śiva is the efficient cause of creation, and also that His Śakti is the instrumental cause. Their differences arise around the question of material cause, the nature of the original substance, whether it is one with or apart from God. They also differ on the identity of the soul and God, evil and final dissolution. While monistic theists, Advaita Īśvaravādins, view the 2,200-year-old *Tirumantiram* as Siddhānta's authority, pluralists, Anekavādins, rely mainly on the 800-year-old *Aghoraśiva Paddhatis* and *Meykandar Śāstras*. The *Tirumantiram* inquires: "Who can know the greatness of our Lord? Who can measure His length and breadth? He is the mighty nameless Flame of whose unknown beginnings I venture to speak." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Are the Two Views on Creation?

### ŚLOKA 147

Monistic theists believe that Śiva creates the cosmos as an emanation of Himself. He is His creation. Pluralistic theists hold that Śiva molds eternally existing matter to fashion the cosmos and is thus not His creation. Aum.

### BHĀSHYA

Pluralistic Siddhāntins hold that God, souls and world—Pati, *paśu* and *pāśa*—are three eternally coexistent realities. By creation, this school understands that Śiva fashions existing matter, *māyā*, into various forms. In other words, God, like a potter, is the efficient cause of the cosmos. But He is not the material cause, the “clay” from which the cosmos is formed. Pluralists hold that any reason for the creation of *pāśa*—*āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā*—whether it be a divine desire, a demonstration of glory or merely a playful sport, makes the Creator less than perfect. Therefore, *pāśa* could never have been created. Monistic Siddhāntins totally reject the potter analogy. They teach that God is simultaneously the efficient, instrumental and material cause. Śiva is constantly emanating creation from Himself. His act of manifestation may be likened to heat issuing from a fire, a mountain from the earth or waves from the ocean. The heat is the fire, the mountain is the earth, the waves are not different from the ocean. The *Vedas* proclaim, “In That all this unites; from That all issues forth. He, omnipresent, is the warp and woof of all created things.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Are the Views on God and Soul?

ŚLOKA 148

For the monistic theist, the soul is an emanation of God Śiva and will merge back in Him as a river to the sea. For pluralists, God pervades but did not create the soul; thus, God and soul remain separate realities forever. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Pluralistic Siddhāntins teach that Śiva pervades the soul, yet the soul is uncreated and exists eternally. It is amorphous, but has the qualities of willing, thinking and acting. It does not wholly merge in Him at the end of its evolution. Rather, it reaches His realm and enjoys the bliss of divine communion eternally. Like salt dissolved in water, soul and God are not two; neither are they perfectly one. For monistic Siddhāntins the soul emerges from God like a rain cloud drawn from the sea. Like a river, the soul passes through many births. The soul consists of an uncreated divine essence and a beautiful, effulgent, human-like form created by Śiva. While this form—called the *ānandamaya kośa* or soul body—is maturing, it is distinct from God. Even during this evolution, its essence, Satchidānanda and Paraśiva, is not different from Śiva. Finally, like a river flowing into the sea, the soul returns to its source. Soul and God are perfectly one. The *Vedas* say, “Just as the flowing rivers disappear in the ocean, casting off name and shape, even so the knower, freed from name and shape, attains to the Primal Soul, higher than the high.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.



## What Are the Differing Views on Evil?

ŚLOKA 149

For monistic theists, the world of *māyā* is Śiva's perfect creation, containing each thing and its opposite. For pluralistic theists, the world is tarnished with evil; thus *māyā* could not be the creation of a perfect God. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Pluralistic Siddhāntins hold that the world of *māyā* is intrinsically evil and imperfect, for it is clearly full of sorrow, injustice, disease and death. The soul, too, is beginninglessly tainted with *āṇava*, or limitation. Pluralists contend that if God had created *māyā*—the material of the world—or the soul, surely He would have made them flawless, and there would be no evil, for imperfection cannot arise out of Perfection. Therefore, they conclude that *āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā* have always existed and the soul has been immersed in darkness and bondage without beginning. Monistic Siddhāntins hold that when viewed from higher consciousness, this world is seen as it truly is—perfect. There is no intrinsic evil. God Śiva has created the principle of opposites, which are the means for the soul's maturation—beauty and deformity, light and darkness, love and hate, joy and sorrow. All is God Śiva Himself, in Him and of Him. A perfect cosmos has issued forth from a perfect Creator. The *Tirumantiram* says, "All manifestations of nature are His grace. All animate and inanimate are His pure grace. As darkness, as light, the Lord's grace pervades." Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Are the Views on Mahāpralaya?

ŚLOKA 150

Monistic theists hold that at *mahāpralaya*, cosmic dissolution, all creation is withdrawn into Śiva, and He alone exists. Pluralistic theists hold that world and souls persist in seed form and will later reemerge. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

BHĀSHYA

Pluralistic Siddhāntins contend that after *mahāpralaya*—the withdrawal of time, form and space into Śiva—souls and world are so close to Śiva that, for all practical purposes, He alone exists. Actually, they say, both world and souls continue to exist, not as things, but as “potentialities.” As if in a deep sleep, souls, now in a bodiless state, rest. Individual *karmas* lie dormant to germinate later when creation again issues forth and nonliberated souls are re-embodied to continue their spiritual journey. Monistic Siddhāntins believe that souls persist through the lesser *pralayas* of the cosmic cycle, but hold that only Śiva exists following *mahāpralaya*. There is no “other,” no separate souls, no separate world. The universe and all souls are absorbed in Śiva. *Pāśa—āṇava, karma* and *māyā*—is annihilated. In the intensity of pre-dissolution, when time itself is accelerated, all souls attain complete maturation, losing separateness through fulfilled merger with Śiva. Yea, *jīva* becomes Śiva. The *Vedas* boldly decree, “By His divine power He holds dominion over all the worlds. At the periods of creation and dissolution of the universe, He alone exists.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Kailāsa Paramparā कैलासपरंपरा



## Himalayan Lineage

Seek the Nāthas who Nandinatha's grace received. First the *rishis* four, Sivayoga the holy next, then Patanjali, who in Sabhā's holy precincts worshiped. Vyaghra and I complete the number eight. Through instruction imparting, Malangan, Indiran, Soman and Brahman, Rudran, Kalangi and Kanchamalayam come as my disciples in succession.

*Rishi Tirumular, Tirumantiram 67. TM*

## What Is Hinduism's Nātha Sampradāya?

ŚLOKA 151

The Nātha Sampradāya, “the masters’ way,” is the mystical fountainhead of Śaivism. The divine message of the eternal truths and how to succeed on the path to enlightenment are locked within the Nātha tradition. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

*Nātha* means “lord or adept,” and *sampradāya* refers to a living theological tradition. The roots of this venerable heritage stretch back beyond recorded history, when awakened Nātha mystics worshiped the Lord of lords, Śiva, and in *yogic* contemplation experienced their identity in Him. The Nātha Sampradāya has revealed the search for the innermost divine Self, balanced by temple worship, fueled by *kuṇḍalinī yoga*, charted by monistic theism, illumined by a potent *guru-śishya* system, guided by soul-stirring scriptures and awakened by *sādhana* and *tapas*. Thus has it given mankind the mechanics for moving forward in evolution. Today two main Nātha streams are well known: the Nandinātha Sampradāya, made famous by Maharishi Nandinatha (ca 250 BCE), and the Ādinātha Sampradāya, carried forth by Siddha Yogi Gorakshanatha (ca 900). Yea, there is infinitely more to know of the mysterious Nāthas. The *Tirumantiram* states, “My peerless *satguru*, Nandinatha, of Śaivism honored high, showed us a holy path for soul’s redemption. It is Śiva’s divine path, San Mārga, for all the world to tread and forever be free.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## What Is the Lofty Kailāsa Paramparā?

ŚLOKA 152

The Kailāsa Paramparā is a millennia-old *guru* lineage of the Nandinātha Sampradāya. In this century it was embodied by Sage Yogaswami, who ordained me in Sri Lanka in **1949** to carry on the venerable tradition. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

The authenticity of Hindu teachings is perpetuated by lineages, paramparā, passed from *gurus* to their successors through ordination. The Kailāsa Paramparā extends back to, and far beyond, Maharishi Nandinatha and his eight disciples—Sanatkumara, Sanakar, Sanadanar, Sananthanar, Sivayogamuni, Patanjali, Vyaghrapada and Tirumular. This succession of *siddha yoga* adepts flourishes today in many streams, most notably in the Śaiva Siddhānta of South India. Our branch of this *paramparā* is the line of Rishi Tirumular (ca 200 BCE), of which the first known *satguru* in recent history was the Rishi from the Himalayas (ca 1770–1840). From him the power was passed to Siddha Kadaitswami of Bangalore (1804–1891), then to Satguru Chellappaswami (1840–1915), then to Sage Yogaswami (1872–1964) of Sri Lanka, and finally to myself, Sivaya Subramuniyaswami (1927–). The *Tirumantiram* states, “Thus expounding, I bore His word down Kailāsa’s unchanging path—the word of Him, the eternal, the truth effulgent, the limitless great, Nandinatha, the joyous one, He of the blissful dance that all impurity dispels.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Who Were the Early Kailāsa Preceptors?

ŚLOKA 153

Among its ancient *gurus*, the Kailāsa Paramparā honors the illustrious Rishi Tirumular and his generations of successors. In recent history we especially revere the silent *siddha* called “Rishi from the Himalayas.” Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Having achieved perfect enlightenment and the eight *siddhis* at the feet of Maharishi Nandinatha in the Himalayas, Rishi Tirumular was sent by his *satguru* to revive Śaiva Siddhānta in the South of India. Finally, he reached Tiruvavaduthurai, where, in the Tamil language, he recorded the truths of the Śaiva Āgamas and the precious *Vedas* in the *Tirumantiram*, a book of over 3,000 esoteric verses. Through the centuries, the Kailāsa mantle was passed from one *siddha yogī* to the next. Among these luminaries was the nameless Rishi from the Himalayas, who in the 1700s entered a teashop in a village near Bangalore, sat down and entered into deep *samādhi*. He did not move for seven years, nor did he speak. Streams of devotees came for his *darśana*. Their unspoken prayers and questions were mysteriously answered in dreams or in written, paper messages that manifested in the air and floated down. Then one day Rishi left the village, later to pass his power to Kadaitswami. The *Tirumantiram* expounds, “With Nandi’s grace I sought the primal cause. With Nandi’s grace I Sadāśiva became. With Nandi’s grace truth divine I attained.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Who Were Kadaitswami and Chellappan?

ŚLOKA 154

Kadaitswami was a dynamic *satguru* who revived Śaivism in Catholic-dominated Jaffna, Sri Lanka, in the 1800s. Chellappaswami was an ardent sage, ablaze with God consciousness, immersed in divine soliloquy. Aum.

BHĀSHYA

Kadaitswami was a powerful *siddha*, standing two meters tall, whose fiery marketplace talks converted thousands back to Śaivism. It is said he was a high court judge who refused to confer the death penalty and renounced his career at middle age to become a *sannyāsin*. Directed by his *satguru* to be a worker of miracles, he performed *siddhis* that are talked about to this day—turning iron to gold, drinking molten wax, disappearing and appearing elsewhere. Chellappaswami, initiated at age nineteen, lived alone in the *teradi* at Nallur temple. Absorbed in the inner Self, recognizing no duality, he uttered *advaitic* axioms in constant refrain: “There is no intrinsic evil. It was all finished long ago. All that is, is Truth. We know not!” The *Natchintanai* says, “Laughing, Chellappan roams in Nallur’s precincts. Appearing like a man possessed, he scorns all outward show. Dark is his body; his only garment, rags. Now all my sins have gone, for he has burnt them up! Always repeating something softly to himself, he will impart the blessing of true life to anyone who ventures to come near him. And he has made a temple of my mind.” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

## Who Are the Most Recent Kailāsa Gurus?

### ŚLOKA 155

Sage Yogaswami, source of *Natchintanai*, protector of *dharma*, was *satguru* of Sri Lanka for half a century. He ordained me with a slap on the back, commanding, “Go round the world and roar like a lion!” Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.

### BHĀSHYA

Amid a festival crowd outside Nallur temple, a disheveled *sādhū* shook the bars from within the chariot shed, shouting, “Hey! Who are you?” and in that moment Yogaswami was transfixed. “There is not one wrong thing!” “It is as it is! Who knows?” Sage Chellappan said, and suddenly the world vanished. After Chellappan’s *mahāsamādhi* in 1915, Yogaswami undertook five years of intense *sādhana*. Later, people of all walks of life, all nations, came for his *darśana*. He urged one and all to “Know thy Self by thyself.” It was in his thatched, dung-floor hermitage in 1949 that we first met. I had just weeks before realized Paraśiva with his inner help while meditating in the caves of Jalani. “You are in me,” he said. “I am in you,” I responded. Later he ordained me “Subramuniyaswami” with a tremendous slap on the back, and with this *dīkshā* sent me as a *sannyāsin* to America, saying, “You will build temples. You will feed thousands.” I was 22 at the time, and he was 77. In fulfillment of his orders have I, Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, composed these 155 *ślokas* and *bhāshyas*, telling an infinitesimal fraction of all that he infused in me. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya.







Śaiva Śraddhā Dhāraṇā

शैवश्रद्धा-धारणा



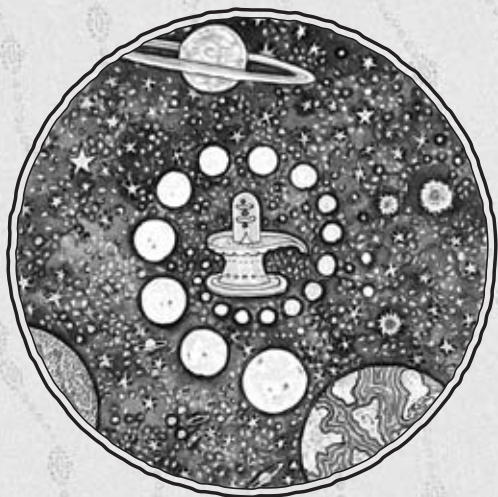
## A Śaivite Creed

Lead me from unreality to reality. Lead me from  
darkness to light. Lead me from death to immortality.

*Natchintanai, "Seek the Profit of the Soul," NT, P. 10*



EVERY RELIGION HAS A CREED, AN AUTHORITATIVE FORMULATION OF ITS BELIEFS. HISTORICALLY, CREEDS HAVE DEVELOPED WHENEVER RELIGIONS migrate from their homelands. Until then the beliefs are fully contained in the culture and taught to children as a natural part of growing up. But when followers settle in other countries where alien faiths predominate, the necessity of a statement of faith arises. A creed is the distillation of volumes of knowledge into a series of easy-to-remember beliefs, or *śraddhā*. A creed summarizes the teachings or articles of faith, to imbed, protect and transmit the beliefs. Creeds give strength to individuals seeking to understand life and religion. Creeds also allow members of one faith to express, in elementary and consistent terms, their traditions to members of another. Though the vast array of doctrines within Sanātana Dharma has not always been articulated in summary form, from ancient times unto today we have the well-known creedal *mahāvākya*, “great sayings,” of the Vedic *Upanishads*. Now, in this technological age in which village integrity is being replaced by worldwide mobility, the importance of a creed becomes apparent if religious identity is to be preserved. We need two kinds of strength—that which is found in diversity and individual freedom to inquire and that which derives from a union of minds in upholding the universal principles of our faith. The twelve beliefs on the following pages embody the centuries-old central convictions of Śaivism, especially the Advaita Íśvaravāda philosophy of Śaiva Siddhānta. Yea, this Śaiva Dharma Śraddhā Dhāraṇā is a total summation of *Dancing with Śiva*. Aum.



BELIEF NUMBER ONE

*Regarding God's  
Unmanifest Reality*

Śiva's followers all believe that Lord Śiva is God, whose Absolute Being, Paraśiva, transcends time, form and space. The *yogī* silently exclaims, "It is not this. It is not that."

Yea, such an inscrutable God is God Śiva. Aum.





BELIEF NUMBER TWO

*Regarding God's Manifest  
Nature of All-Pervading Love*

Śiva's followers all believe  
that Lord Śiva is God, whose  
immanent nature of love, Parāśakti,  
is the substratum, primal substance  
or pure consciousness flowing  
through all form as energy,  
existence, knowledge  
and bliss. Aum.



## BELIEF NUMBER THREE

*Regarding God as Personal  
Lord and Creator of All*

Śiva's followers all believe that Lord Śiva is God, whose immanent nature is the Primal Soul, Supreme Mahādeva, Parameśvara, author of *Vedas* and *Āgamas*, the creator, preserver and destroyer of all that exists. Aum.



## BELIEF NUMBER FOUR

*Regarding the  
Elephant-Faced Deity*

Śiva's followers all believe  
in the Mahādeva Lord Gaṇeśa,  
son of Śiva-Śakti, to whom they must  
first supplicate before beginning any  
worship or task. His rule is compas-  
sionate. His law is just. Justice is  
His mind. Aum.



## BELIEF NUMBER FIVE

*Regarding the  
Deity Kārttikeya*

Śiva's followers all believe  
in the Mahādeva Kārttikeya, son of  
Śiva-Śakti, whose *vel* of grace dissolves  
the bondages of ignorance. The *yogī*,  
locked in lotus, venerates Murugan.

Thus restrained, his mind  
becomes calm. Aum.





## BELIEF NUMBER SIX

*Regarding the Soul's Creation  
And Its Identity with God*

Śiva's followers all believe that each soul is created by Lord Śiva and is identical to Him, and that this identity will be fully realized by all souls when the bondage of *āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā* is removed by His grace. Aum.



## BELIEF NUMBER SEVEN

*Regarding the Gross, Subtle  
And Causal Planes of Existence*

Śiva's followers all believe  
in three worlds: the gross plane,  
where souls take on physical bodies;  
the subtle plane, where souls take on  
astral bodies; and the causal plane,  
where souls exist in their self-  
effulgent form. Aum.



## BELIEF NUMBER EIGHT

*Regarding Karma, Saṁsāra  
And Liberation from Rebirth*

Śiva's followers all believe in the law of *karma*—that one must reap the effects of all actions he has caused—and that each soul continues to reincarnate until all *karmas* are resolved and *moksha*, liberation, is attained. Aum.



## BELIEF NUMBER NINE

*Regarding the Four Mārgas,  
Or Stages of Inner Progress*

Śiva's followers all believe that the performance of *charyā*, virtuous living, *kriyā*, temple worship, and *yoga*, leading to Paraśiva through the grace of the living *satguru*, is absolutely necessary to bring forth *jñāna*, wisdom. Aum.





## BELIEF NUMBER TEN

*Regarding the  
Goodness of All*

Śiva's followers all believe  
there is no intrinsic evil. Evil has  
no source, unless the source of evil's  
seeming be ignorance itself. They are  
truly compassionate, knowing that  
ultimately there is no good or bad.  
All is Śiva's will. Aum.



## BELIEF NUMBER ELEVEN

*Regarding the Esoteric  
Purpose of Temple Worship*

Śiva's followers all believe that religion is the harmonious working together of the three worlds and that this harmony can be created through temple worship, wherein the beings of all three worlds can communicate. Aum.



## BELIEF NUMBER TWELVE

*Regarding the  
Five Letters*

Śiva's followers all believe in the Pañchākshara Mantra, the five sacred syllables "Namaḥ Śivāya," as Śaivism's foremost and essential *mantra*. The secret of Namaḥ Śivāya is to hear it from the right lips at the right time. Aum.



## Conclusion

### *Nirvahaṇam*

### निर्वहणम्

**T**HERE IS NO COMING. THERE IS NO GOING. YOU AND I ARE EVER ONE. REMAIN SILENT AND KNOW THE SELF WITHIN. YOU WON'T FIND IT IN BOOKS. You will find it deep within yourself, my *satguru* said. So, *Dancing with Śiva* is a signpost to point the way. It is a map to give direction. And it is a daily *sādhana*, reading one *śloka* a day, at night just before sleep, to remold the subconscious memory patterns of the base subjective mind into a brand new you. The wisdom of the *Vedas* will be yours when the old *saṁskāras* no longer fight with the new. The old impressions of how you were raised, whom and what you were taught to like and dislike will be erased by the eternal wisdom of the *Vedas* and *Āgamas*, amplified by the explanations above the verses in each of these daily lessons. All this will bring you new life and new hope. It will bring you solace, contentment and a deep, inner, growing knowledge of the creation of this universe, its preservation and dissolution. It will show you that, yes, you are the center of the universe, the Self, the infinite and supreme Paraśiva. With this goal well in mind, you will persist in working out the patterns of the past, living in the eternal present while being selective in the new patterns you create in the future, as you dance with Śiva from life to life, live with Śiva from life to life, and slowly merge with Śiva. Aum Namaḥ Śivāya!





## Glossary

### Śabda Kośaḥ

### शब्दकोशः

**A** *aadheenam*: ஆதீனம் A Śaivite Hindu monastery and temple complex in the South Indian Śaiva Siddhānta tradition. The *aadheenam* head is called the *guru mahāsannidhānam* or *aadheenakartha*.

**abhaya**: अभय Fearlessness, a cardinal virtue. Also names the *mudrā* (hand pose) common in Hindu icons, betokening “fear not,” in which the fingers of the right hand are raised and the palm faces forward.

**abhisheka**: अभिषेक “Sprinkling; ablution.” Ritual bathing of the Deity’s image with water, curd, milk, honey, *ghee*, rosewater, etc.

**Absolute**: Lower case (absolute): real, not dependent on anything else, not relative. Upper case (Absolute): Ultimate Reality, the unmanifest, unchanging and transcendent Paraśiva. See: *Paraśiva*.

**āchārya**: आचार्य A highly respected teacher. See: *dikshā*.

**adharma**: अधर्म Negative, opposite of *dharma*. Thoughts, words or deeds that transgress divine law. Unrighteousness, irreligiousness; demerit.

**Ādiśaiva**: आदिशैव A hereditary priest and teacher of the South Indian Śaiva Siddhānta tradition; synonymous with *Śivāchārya*.

**advaita**: अद्वैत “Non-dual; not twofold.” Nonduality or monism. The doctrine that Ultimate Reality consists of a one principle substance, or God. Opposite of *dvaita*, dualism. See: *dvaita-advaita*, *Vedānta*.

**Advaita Īśvaravāda**: अद्वैत ईश्वरवाद “Nondual and Personal-God-as-Ruler doctrine,” *monistic theism*. The philosophy of the *Vedas* and Śaiva Āgamas, which believes in the ultimate oneness of all things and in the reality of the personal Deity.

**Advaita Īśvaravādin**: अद्वैत ईश्वरवादिन् A follower of Advaita

Īśvaravāda.

**Advaita Siddhānta:** अद्वैत सिद्धान्त “Nondual perfect conclusions.”

Śaivite philosophy codified in the *Āgamas* which has at its core the nondual (*advaitic*) identity of God, soul and world. with a strong emphasis on internal and external worship, *yoga sādhanas* and *tapas*. *Advaita Siddhānta* is a term used in South India to distinguish Tirumular’s school from the pluralistic Siddhānta of Meykandar and Aghorasiva. It is the philosophy of this contemporary Hindu catechism.

**Āgama:** आगम The tradition that which has “come down.” An enormous collection of Sanskrit scriptures which, along with the *Vedas*, are revered as *śruti* (revealed scripture). The primary source and authority for ritual, *yoga* and temple construction.

**agni:** अग्नि “Fire.” 1) One of the five elements, *pañchabhūta*. 2) God of the element fire, invoked through Vedic ritual known as *yajña*, *agnikāraka*, *homa* and *havana*; the divine messenger who receives prayers and oblations and conveys them to the heavenly spheres. See: *yajña*.

**agnihotra:** अग्निहोत्र “Fire sacrifice.” Household rite traditionally performed daily, in which an oblation of milk is sprinkled on the fire. See: *yajña*.

**ahimsā:** अहिंसा “Noninjury,” nonviolence or nonhurtfulness. Not causing harm to others, physically, mentally or emotionally. See: *yama-niyama*.

**ājñā chakra:** आज्ञाचक्र “Command wheel.” The third-eye center. See: *chakra*.

**ākāśa:** आकाश “Space.” The sky. Free, open space. Ether, the fifth and most subtle of the five elements—earth, air, fire, water and ether. Empirically, the rarefied space or ethereal fluid plasma that pervades the universes, inner and outer. Esoterically, mind, the superconscious strata holding all that exists and all that potentially exists, wherein all happenings are recorded and can be read by clairvoyants.

**all-pervasive:** Diffused throughout or existing in every part of the

universe. See: *Satchidānanda*.

**Alvar:** ஆழ்வார் “One who sways the Lord through *bhakti*.” A group of renowned saints of the Vaishṇava religion (7th–9th century), devotional mystics whose lives and teachings catalyzed a resurgence of Vaishṇavism in Tamil Nadu.

**Ambikā:** अम्बिका “Mother.” A benign form of the Goddess, one of the central Deities of the Śākta religion, along with Durgā, Kālī and Pārvatī. See: *Śakti*.

**Amman:** அம்மன் “Mother.” Usually refers to Mariyamman, the “smallpox Goddess,” protectress from plagues, a popular Grāmadevatā (“village Deity,” or local tutelary Deity). In the Tamil tradition, *amman* is the epithet of various Goddesses, as in Kālī Amman or Draupadi Amman.

**anāhata chakra:** अनाहतचक्र “Wheel of unstruck [sound].” The heart center. See: *chakra*.

**ānanda:** आनन्द “Bliss.” The pure joy—ecstasy or enstasy—of God-consciousness or spiritual experience.

**ānandamaya kośa:** आनन्दमयकोश “Bliss body.” The body of the soul, which ultimately merges with Śiva. See: *kośa*, *soul*.

**āṇava mala:** आणवमल “Impurity of smallness; finitizing principle.” God’s individualizing veil of duality that enshrouds the soul. It is the source of finitude and ignorance, the most basic of the three bonds (*āṇava*, *karma*, *māyā*) which temporarily limit the soul.

**Anbe Sivamayam Satyame Parasivan:** அன்பே சிவமயம் சத்தியமே பரசிவம் Tamil for “God Śiva is Immanent Love and transcendent Reality,” the affirmation of faith which capsulizes the entire creed of monistic Śaiva Siddhānta.

**anchorite:** “Hermit.” A monk or aspirant who lives alone and apart from society, as contrasted with *cenobite*, a member of a religious order living in a monastery or convent.

**Andal:** ஆண்டாளர் Famed Vaishṇava saint of Tamil Nadu. One of the Alvars, she lived in the early 9th century and today is venerated as one of South India’s greatest *bhakta* poets.

**añjali mudrā:** अञ्जलिमुद्रा “Reverence gesture.” Also called

*praṇāmāñjali*. A gesture of respect and greeting, in which the two palms are held gently together and slightly cupped. See: *mudrā*, *namaskāra*.

**anīkuśa:** अंकुश Goad, symbol of Lord Gaṇeśa's power to remove obstacles from the devotee's path, and to spur the dullards onward.

**annaprāśana:** अन्नप्राशन "Feeding." The childhood sacrament of first solid food. See: *saṁskāra*.

**Antarloka:** अन्तर्लोक "Inner or in-between world." The astral plane. See: *loka*.

**antyeshti:** अन्त्येष्टि "Last rites." Funeral.

**anugraha śakti:** अनुग्रहशक्ति "Graceful or favoring power." Revealing grace. God Śiva's power of illumination, through which the soul is freed from the bonds of *āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā* and ultimately attains liberation, *moksha*.

**Aśmārapurusha:** अपस्मारपुरुष "Forgetful person." The soul under Śiva's foot of obscuring grace, depicted in numerous icons. He represents ignorance and heedlessness. See: *Naṭarāja*.

**Āraṇyaka:** आरण्यक "Forest treatise." Third section of each of the four *Vedas*, containing esoteric knowledge, largely on the inner meanings and functions of the Vedic *yajña*, or fire ceremonies.

**ārati:** आरती "Light." The circling or waving of a lamp—usually fed with *ghee*, camphor or oil—before a holy person or the temple Deity at the high point of *pūjā*. See: *pūjā*.

**archana:** अर्चन A special, personal, abbreviated *pūjā* done by temple priests in which the name, birthstar and family lineage of a devotee are recited to invoke individual guidance and blessings. See: *pūjā*.

**Ardhanārīśvara:** अर्धनारीश्वर "Half-female Lord." Lord Śiva in androgynous form, male on the right side and female on the left, indicating that: Śiva (like all Mahādevas) is genderless; and that Śiva is All, inseparable from His energy, Śakti.

**ārjava:** आर्जव "Steadfastness." See: *yama-niyama*.

**artha:** अर्थ "Goal or purpose; wealth, property." Also has the mean-

ing of utility, desire. See: *purushārtha*.

**Aryaman:** अर्यमन् “Close friend;” matchmaker; Sun God. A Vedic Deity who personifies hospitality, the household and *grihasta* life.

**āsana:** आसन “Seat; posture.” In *haṭha yoga*, *āsana* refers to any of numerous poses prescribed to balance and tune up the subtle energies of mind and body for meditation and to promote health and longevity.

**ashtāṅga prañāma:** अष्टाङ्गप्रणाम “Eight-part salutation.” See: *prañāma*.

**ashtāṅga yoga:** अष्टाङ्गयोग “Eight-limbed union.” The classical *rāja yoga* system of eight progressive stages: restraints (*yama*), observances (*niyama*), postures (*āsana*), breath control (*prāṇāyāma*), sense withdrawal (*pratyāhāra*), concentration (*dhāraṇā*), meditation (*dhyāna*) and contemplation (*samādhi*/Self Realization). See: *āsana*, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, *prāṇāyāma*, *pratyāhāra*, *rāja yoga*, *samādhi*, *yama-niyama*, *yoga*.

**āśrama:** आश्रम “Place of striving.” Hermitage; order of the life. Holy sanctuary; the residence and teaching center of a *sādhu*, saint, *swāmī*, ascetic or *guru*; often includes lodging for students. Also names life’s four stages. See: *āśrama dharma*.

**āśrama dharma:** आश्रमधर्म “Laws of life development.” Meritorious way of life appropriate to each of its four successive stages (*āśramas*): 1) **brahmacharya:** Studentship, from age 12 to 24. 2) **grihasta:** Householder, from 24 to 48. 3) **vānaprastha:** Elder advisor, from 48 to 72. 4) **sannyāsa:** Religious solitary, from 72 onward.

**asteya:** अस्तेय “Nonstealing.” See: *yama-niyama*.

**āstikya:** आस्तिक्य “Faith.” See: *śraddhā*, *yama-niyama*.

**astral body:** The subtle, nonphysical body (*sūkshma śarīra*) in which the soul functions in the astral plane, the inner world also called *Antarloka*. See: *kośa*, *soul*.

**astral plane:** The subtle world, or *Antarloka*, spanning the spectrum of consciousness from the *viśuddha chakra* in the throat to

the *pātāla chakra* in the soles of the feet. In the astral plane, the soul is enshrouded in the astral body, called *sūkshma śarīra*. See: *astral body, loka, Naraka, three worlds*.

**asura:** असुर “Evil spirit; demon.” (Opposite of *sura*: “*deva*; God.”) A being of the lower astral plane, Naraka. *Asuras* can and do interact with the physical plane, causing major and minor problems in people’s lives. *Asuras* do evolve and do not remain permanently in this state. See: *Naraka*.

**Asvin:** अश्विन Vedic twin heroes—young, handsome, bright and dashing—who personify the dawn, the transition from darkness to light, and from disease to health.

**ātman:** आत्मन् “The soul; the breath; the principle of life and sensation.” The soul in its entirety—as the soul body (*ānandamaya kośa*) and its essence (Parāśakti and Paraśiva). See: *kośa, Paramātmān, soul*.

**ātmārtha pūjā:** आत्मार्थपूजा “Personal worship rite.” Home *pūjā*. See: *pūjā*.

**Aum:** ॐ or ओम् Often spelled *Om*. The mystic syllable of Hinduism, associated with Lord Gaṇeśa, placed at the beginning of sacred writings. In common usage in several Indian languages, *aum* means “yes, verily” or “hail.” See: *Praṇava*.

**aura:** The luminous colorful field of subtle energy radiating within and around the human body. The colors change according to the ebb and flow of one’s state of consciousness, thoughts, moods and emotions.

**Auvaiyar:** ஆவையார் A saint of Tamil Nadu (ca 200 BCE), a contemporary of Saint Tiruvalluvar, devotee of Lord Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya and one of the greatest literary figures in ancient India.

**avatāra:** अवतार “Descent.” A God born in a human (or animal) body. A central concept of Śāktism, Smārtism and Vaiṣṇavism.

**awareness:** Individual consciousness, perception, knowing; the witness of perception, the “inner eye of the soul.” *Sākshin* or

*chit* in Sanskrit.

**āyurveda:** आयुर्वेद “Science of life.” A holistic system of medicine and health native to ancient India, seeking *āyus*, “longevity,” and *ārogya*, “diseaselessness,” to facilitate spiritual progress. Focus is on balancing energies through methods suited to the individual’s constitution, lifestyle and nature. See: *doshas*.

**Ayyappan:** ജയപ്പൻ Popular God of a recently formed sect that focuses on pilgrimage to the top of Sabarimalai, a sacred hill in Kerala.

**B** **balipīṭha:** बलिपीठ “Offering place.” An inverted lotus-shaped stone atop a pedestal situated near the flagpole, where devotees leave all negative thoughts before entering the temple.

**Being:** When capitalized, *being* refers to God’s essential divine nature—Pure Consciousness, Absolute Reality and Primal Soul (God’s nature as a divine Person). Lower case *being* refers to the essential nature of a person, that within which never changes; existence. See: *Śiva*.

**Bhaga:** भग “Bestower” of fortune. A God of the *Rig Veda*; Lord of wealth, prowess and happiness.

**Bhagavad Gītā:** भगवद् गीता “Song of the Lord.” One of the most popular of Hindu writings, a conversation between Lord Kṛishṇa and Arjuna on the brink of the great battle at Kurukshetra. A central episode of the epic *Mahābhārata* discussing *yoga*, asceticism, *dharma* and the manifold spiritual path.

**Bhāgavata:** भागवत “Possessor of fortune;” gracious Lord. Relating to God or a God; holy, sacred, divine.” Pertaining to Viṣṇu or Kṛishṇa. A sect of Vaishṇavism. or the Vaishṇavite religion as a whole.

**Bhairava:** भैरव “Terrifying.” Lord Śiva as the fiery protector who carries and is represented by a *triśūla* (trident), often enshrined as guardian at the entrance to Śiva temples.

**bhajana:** भजन Spiritual song. Individual or group singing of devotional songs, hymns and chants.

**bhakta:** भक्त “Devotee.” A worshiper. One who is surrendered in the Divine.

**bhakti:** भक्ति “Devotion.” Surrender to God, Gods or *guru*.

**bhakti yoga:** भक्तियोग “Union through devotion,” devotional disciplines, worship, prayer, chanting and singing, awakening love in the heart and opening oneself to God’s grace.

**Bharata (Bhārata):** भारत “He who supports, maintains or bears a burden.” The ancient and original name of India and its constitutional name in Hindi.

**bhāshya:** भाष्य “Talking over, discussion.” Commentary on a text or scripture.

**Bhūloka:** भूलोक “Earth world.” The physical plane. See: *loka*.

**bhūmikā:** भूमिका “Earth; ground; soil.” Preface; introduction to a book. From *bhū*, “to become, exist; arise, come into being.”

**bilva:** बिल्व Wood-apple (or bael) tree, *Aegle marmelos*, sacred to Lord Śiva.

**bindu:** बिन्दु “A drop, small particle, dot.” 1) The seed or source of creation, Śakti *tattva*. 2) Small dot worn on the forehead, a sign that one is a Hindu and mystically representing the “third eye,” which sees things that the physical eyes cannot see.

**birth chart:** *Janmapatrikā*. An astrological map of the sky drawn for a person’s moment and place of birth.

**birthstar:** See: *nakshatra*.

**Bodhinatha (Bodhinātha):** भोधिनाथ “Lord of Wisdom.” The current preceptor of the Nandinātha Sampradāya’s Kailāsa Paramparā, and Guru Mahāsannidhānam of Kauai Aadheenam, ordained by Satguru, Sivaya Subramuniyaswami in 2001.

**Brahmā:** ब्रह्मा God in His aspect of Creator.

**brahmachārī:** ब्रह्मचारी An unmarried male spiritual aspirant who practices continence, observes religious disciplines, including *sādhana*, devotion and service and who may be under simple vows. Also names one in the student stage, age 12–24, or until marriage.

**brahmachārīṇī:** ब्रह्मचारिणी Feminine counterpart of *brah-*



*machāri.*

**brahmacharya:** ब्रह्मचर्य See: *yama-niyama*.

**brahmacharya āśrama:** ब्रह्मचर्य आश्रम See: *āśrama dharma*.

**brāhma muhūrta:** ब्राह्ममुहूर्त “God’s hour.” A very favorable time for *sādhana*, roughly 1.5 hours, the last *muhūrta* of the night in the 8-*muhūrta* system; the final three *muhūrtas* of the night in 15 or 16-*muhūrta* systems. See: *muhūrta*.

**Brahman:** ब्रह्मन् “Supreme Being; Expansive Spirit.” From the root *br̥h*, “to grow, increase, expand.” Name of God or Supreme Deity in the *Vedas*.

**Brāhmaṇa:** ब्राह्मण 1) One of four primary sections of each *Veda*; concerned mainly with details of *yajña*, and specific duties and rules for priests; 2) The first of the four *varṇas*, or social classes, comprising pious souls of exceptional learning. Also spelled *brāhmin*. See: *brāhmin*, *varṇa dharma*, *Vedas*.

**Brahma Sūtra(s):** ब्रह्मसूत्र Also known as the *Vedānta Sūtras*, composed by Badarayana (perhaps as early as 400 BCE) as the first known systematic exposition of Upanishadic thought.

**brāhmin (brāhmaṇa):** ब्राह्मण “Mature” or “evolved” soul. The class of pious souls of exceptional learning. From *Brāhman*, “growth, expansion, evolution, development, swelling of the spirit or soul.”

**brāhminical tradition:** The hereditary religious practices of the Vedic *brāhmins*, such as reciting *mantras*, and personal rules for daily living.

**Brahmotsava:** ब्रह्मोत्सव “God’s principal festival.” Each temple has one most important festival of the year which is its major celebration, called *Brahmotsava*, often a ten-day event.

**buddhi:** बुद्धि “Intellect, reason, logic.” The intellectual or disciplined mind.

**Caste:** A hierarchical system, called *varṇa dharma* (or *jāti dharma*), established in India in ancient times, which determined the privileges, status, rights and duties of the many occu-

pational groups, wherein status is determined by heredity. There are four main classes or *varṇas*—*brāhmin*, *kshatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra*—and numerous castes, called *jāti*. See: *varṇa dharma*.

**causal plane:** The highest or most subtle realm of existence, Śivaloka. See: *loka*.

**chakra:** चक्र “Wheel.” Any of the nerve plexes or centers of force and consciousness located within the *inner bodies* of man. In the physical body there are corresponding nerve plexuses, ganglia and glands. The seven principal *chakras* are situated along the spinal cord from the base to the cranial chamber. Additionally, seven *chakras* exist below the spine. They are seats of instinctive consciousness, the origin of jealousy, hatred, envy, guilt, sorrow, etc. They constitute the lower or hellish world, called *Naraka* or *pātāla*. Thus, there are 14 major *chakras* in all. The seven upper *chakras* are: 1) *mūlādhāra* (base of spine): memory, time and space; 2) *svādhishṭhāna* (below navel): reason; 3) *maṇipūra* (solar plexus): willpower; 4) *anāhata* (heart center): direct cognition; 5) *viśuddha* (throat): divine love; 6) *ājñā* (third eye): divine sight; 7) *sahasrāra* (crown of head): illumination, Godliness. The seven lower *chakras* are 1) *atala* (hips): fear and lust; 2) *vitala* (thighs): raging anger; 3) *sutala* (knees): retaliatory jealousy; 4) *talātala* (calves): prolonged mental confusion; 5) *rasātala* (ankles): selfishness; 6) *mahātala* (feet): absence of conscience; 7) *pātāla* (located in the soles of the feet): murder and malice. See: *Naraka*.

**chandra:** चन्द्र “The moon.” Of central importance in Hindu astrology. Considered the ruler of emotion.

**Charvaka (Chārvāka):** चार्वाक “Good” or “sweet voice” or “word.” Indian philosopher (ca 600 BCE) who gave the name to the school of uncompromising materialism. One of the great skeptics of all time. See: *nāstika*.

**charyā pāda:** चर्यापाद “Conduct stage.” Stage of service and character building. See: *pāda*.

**chaturdharma:** चतुर्धर्म “Four dharmas:” *ṛita*, *āśrama dharma*, *varṇa*

*dharma* and *svadharma*. See: *dharma*.

**Chellappaswami:** செல்லப்பாசுவாமி “Wealthy father.” Reclusive *siddha* and 160th *satguru* (1840-1915) of the Nandinātha Sampradāya’s Kailāsa Paramparā. Among his disciples was Sage Yogaswami, whom he trained intensely for five years and initiated as his successor. See: *Kailāsa Paramparā*, *Nātha Sampradāya*.

**chitsabhā:** चित्सभा “Hall of consciousness.” See: *Naṭarāja*.

**chitta:** चित्त “Mind; consciousness.” Mind-stuff. On the personal level, it is that in which mental impressions and experiences are recorded. Seat of the conscious, subconscious and superconscious states, and of the threefold mental faculty, called *antaḥkaraṇa*, consisting of *buddhi*, *manas* and *aharṇkāra*.

**chūḍākaraṇa:** चूडाकरण Head-shaving sacrament. See: *saṁskāra*.

**circumambulation:** *Pradakshinā*. Walking around, usually clockwise. See: *pradakshinā*, *pūjā*.

**clairaudience:** “Clear-hearing.” Psychic or divine hearing, *divyaśravaṇa*. The ability to hear inner currents of the nervous system, the *Aum* and other mystic tones. Hearing in one’s mind the words of inner-plane beings or earthly beings not physically present.

**clairvoyance:** “Clear-seeing.” Psychic or divine sight, *divyadrishṭi*. The ability to look into the inner worlds and see auras, *chakras*, *nāḍīs*, thought forms, non-physical people and subtle forces. The ability to see from afar or into the past or future—*avadhijñāna*, “knowing beyond limits.”

**concealing grace:** See: *tirodhāna śakti*.

**concentration:** Uninterrupted and sustained attention. See: *rāja yoga*.

**conscious mind:** The external, everyday state of consciousness. See: *mind*.

**consciousness:** *Chitta* or *chaitanya*. 1) A synonym for mind-stuff, *chitta*; or 2) the condition or power of perception, awareness, apprehension.

**consecrated temple:** A temple duly and fully established in all three worlds through formal religious ceremony known as

*kumbhābisheka.*

**consort:** Spouse, especially of a king or queen, God or Goddess. Among the Gods there are actually no sexes or sexual distinctions, though in mythological folk narratives Hinduism represents these great beings in elaborate anthropomorphic depictions.

**contemplation:** Religious or mystical absorption beyond meditation.

**cosmic cycle:** One of the infinitely recurring periods of the universe, comprising its creation, preservation and dissolution. These cycles are measured in periods of progressive ages, called *yugas*. Satya (or Kṛita), Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali are these four divisions, with the Satya Yuga being the longest and the Kali Yuga the shortest.

**Cosmic Dance:** See: *Naṭarāja*.

**Cosmic Soul:** Purusha or Parameśvara. Primal Soul. The Universal Being; Personal God. See: *Parameśvara*, *Primal Soul*, *purusha*, *Śiva*.

**cosmos:** The universe, or whole of creation, especially with reference to its order, harmony and completeness. See: *Brahmāṇḍa*, *loka*, *three worlds*.

**cranial *chakras*:** The *ājñā*, or third-eye center, and the *sahasrāra*, at the top of the head near the pineal and pituitary glands. See: *chakra*.

**creed:** *Śraddhādhāraṇā*. An authoritative formulation of the beliefs of a religion.

**crown *chakra*:** *Sahasrāra chakra*. The thousand-petaled cranial center of divine consciousness. See: *chakra*.

**D** **Dakṣiṇāmūrti:** दक्षिणामूर्ति “South-facing form.” Lord Śiva depicted sitting under a banyan tree, silently teaching four *ṛishis* at His feet.

**dampatī:** दम्पती “House master(s).” An honorific title for husband and wife as the dual masters of the Hindu home.

**dāna:** दान Generosity, giving. See: *yama-niyama*.

**darśana:** दर्शन “Vision, sight.” Seeing the Divine. Beholding, with

inner or outer vision, a temple image, Deity, holy person or place, with the desire to inwardly contact and receive the grace and blessings of the venerated being or beings. Also: “point of view,” doctrine or philosophy. See: *śaḍ darśana*.

**daśama bhāga vrata:** दशभागव्रत “One-tenth-part vow.” A promise that tithers make before God, Gods and their family or peers to tithe regularly.

**daśamāṁśa:** दशमांश “One-tenth sharing.” The traditional Hindu practice of tithing, giving one-tenth of one’s income to a religious institution.

**dāsa mārṅa:** दासमार्ग “Servant’s path.” See: *pāda*.

**Daśanāmī:** दशनामी “Ten names.” Ten monastic orders organized by Adi Sankara (ca 800): Āraṇya, Vāna, Giri, Pārvaṭa, Sāgara, Tīrtha, Āśrama, Bhārati, Pūrī and Sarasvatī.

**dayā:** दया “Compassion.” See: *yama-niyama*.

**Deity:** “God.” The image or *mūrti* installed in a temple or the Mahādeva the *mūrti* represents.

**deva:** देव “Shining one.” A being inhabiting the higher astral plane, in a subtle, nonphysical body. *Deva* is also used in scripture to mean “God or Deity.”

**Devaloka:** देवलोक “Plane of radiant beings.” A synonym of Maharloka, the higher astral plane, realm of *anāhata chakra*. See: *loka*.

**Devī:** देवी “Goddess.” A name of Śakti, used especially in Śāktism. See: *Śakti, Śāktism*.

**devonic:** Of or relating to the *devas* or their world.

**Dhammapada:** धम्मपद The holy book of Buddhism.

**Dhanurveda:** धनुर्वेद “Science of archery.” A class of ancient texts on the military arts, comprising the *Upaveda* of the *Yajur Veda*.

**dhāraṇā:** धारणा “Concentration.” From *dhṛi*, “to hold.” See: *meditation, rāja yoga, śraddādhāraṇā, yoga*.

**dharma:** धर्म From *dhṛi*, “to sustain; carry, hold.” Hence *dharma* is “that which contains or upholds the cosmos.” *Dharma* has manifold meanings, including: divine law, ethics, law of being,

way of righteousness, religion, duty, virtue, justice, goodness and truth. Essentially, *dharma* is the orderly fulfillment of an inherent nature or destiny. Relating to the soul, it is the mode of conduct most conducive to spiritual advancement, the right and righteous path. There are four principal kinds of *dharma*, known collectively as ***chaturdharma***: “four religious laws.” 1) ***ṛita***: “Universal law.” The laws of being and nature that contain and govern all forms, functions and processes, from galaxy clusters to the power of mental thought and perception. 2) ***varṇa dharma***: “Law of one’s kind.” Social duty. *Varṇa* can mean “race, tribe, appearance, character, color, social standing, etc.” Obligations and responsibilities within one’s nation, society, community, class, occupational subgroup and family. 3) ***āśrama dharma***: “Duties of life’s stages.” Human or developmental *dharma*, fulfilling of the duties of the four stages of life—*brahmachārī* (student), *grihastha* (householder), *vānaprastha* (elder advisor) and *sannyāsa* (religious solitaire). 4) ***svadharma***: “Personal obligations or duty.” One’s perfect individual pattern through life, according to one’s own particular physical, mental and emotional nature, the application of *dharma*, dependent on personal *karma*, reflected in one’s race, community, physical characteristics, health, intelligence, skills and aptitudes, desires and tendencies, religion, *sampradāya*, family and *guru*.

***Dharma Śāstra***: धर्मशास्त्र “Religious jurisprudence.” The numerous codes of Hindu civil and social law composed by various authorities. Best known and most respected are those by Manu and Yajñavalkya, composed as early as 600 BCE.

***dhōṭi***: धोती (Hindi) A long, unstitched cloth wound about the lower part of the body. A traditional Hindu apparel for men. See: *veshti*.

***dhṛiti***: धृति “Steadfastness.” See: *yama-niyama*.

***dhvaja***: ध्वज “Flag.” Flags and banners, usually orange or red, flown at festivals and other special occasions to symbolize the victory of *Sanātana Dharma*.

**dhvajastambha:** ध्वजस्तम्भ “Flag tree, flagpole.” (*Kodimaram* in Tamil.) Cylindrical post usually behind the *vāhana* in Āgamic temples.

**dhyanā:** ध्यान “Meditation.” See: *rāja yoga*.

**diaspora:** From the Greek *diasperein*, “scattering.” Geographic dispersion of religious/ethnic group(s).

**dikshā:** दीक्षा “Initiation.” Solemn induction by which one is entered into a new realm of spiritual awareness and practice by a teacher or preceptor through bestowing of blessings. Denotes initial or deepened connection with the teacher and his lineage and is usually accompanied by ceremony.

**Dīpāvali:** दीपावली “Row of Lights.” A very popular home and community festival in October/November when Hindus of all denominations light oil or electric lights and set off fireworks in a joyful celebration of the victory of good over evil and light over darkness.

**Divine Mother:** Śakti, especially as Personal Goddess, as conceived of and worshiped by Śāktas. See: *Śakti*.

**dosha:** दोष “Bodily humor; individual constitution.” The three bodily humors, which according to *āyurveda* regulate the body, govern its proper functioning and determine its unique constitution. These are *vāta*, the air humor; *pitta*, the fire humor; and *kapha*, the water humor.

**dualism:** See: *dvaita-advaita*.

**Durgā:** दुर्गा “She who is incomprehensible or difficult to reach.” A form of Śakti worshiped in Her gracious as well as terrifying aspect. See: *Śakti*, *Śāktism*.

**dvaita-advaita:** द्वैत अद्वैत “Dual-nondual; twoness-not twoness.” *Dvaita* and *advaita* define two ends of a vast spectrum. —**dvaita:** Dualism, according to which reality is ultimately composed of two irreducible eternally separate principles, entities, truths, etc. God and soul, for example. —**dualistic:** Of or relating to dualism, concepts, writings, theories which treat dualities (good-and-evil, high-and-low, them-and-us) as fixed, rather than transcendable.

—**pluralism**: A form of non-monism which emphasizes three or more eternally separate realities, e.g., God, soul and world.

—**advaita**: The doctrine of nondualism or monism, that reality is ultimately composed of one whole principle, substance or God, with no independent parts. In essence, all is God. —**monistic theism**: A dipolar view which encompasses both monism and dualism.

**efficient cause**: *Nimitta kāraṇa*. That which directly produces the effect; that which conceives, makes, shapes, etc.

**ego**: The external personality or sense of “I” and “mine.” Broadly, individual identity. In Śaiva Siddhānta and other schools, the ego is equated with the *tattva* of *ahamkāra*, “I-maker,” which bestows the sense of I-ness, individuality and separateness from God.

**emanation**: “Flowing out from.” *Ābhāsa*. Shining forth from a source, emitting or issuing from.

**Eminent**: High; above others in stature, rank or achievement.

**enlightenment**: For Śaiva monists, Self Realization, *samādhi* without seed (*nirvikalpa samādhi*); the ultimate attainment, sometimes referred to as Paramātmā *darśana*, or as *ātma darśana*, “Self vision.”

**ether**: *Ākāśa*. Space, the most subtle of the five elements. See: *ākāśa*, *tattva*.

**Folk-shamanic**: Of or related to a tribal/village tradition in which the mystic priest, shaman, plays a central role, wielding powers of magic and spirituality.

**formless**: Philosophically, *atattva*, beyond the realm of form or substance. In describing the Self as formless, the words *timeless* and *spaceless* are given also to fully indicate this totally transcendent noncondition. See: *Paraśiva*, *Satchidānanda*, *void*.



**G gaja:** गज The elephant, king of beasts, representative of Lord Gaṇeśa and sign of royalty and power.

**gaṇa(s):** गण “Throng; troop; retinue; a body of followers or attendants.” A troop of demigods—God Śiva’s attendants, devonic helpers under the supervision of Lord Gaṇeśa. See: *Gaṇapati*, *Gaṇeśa*.

**Gaṇapati:** गणपति “Leader of the *gaṇas*.”

**Gāndharvaveda:** गान्धर्ववेद “Science of music.” A class of ancient tracts on music, song and dance. It is the *Upaveda* of the *Sāma Veda*. See: *Upaveda*.

**Gaṇeśa:** गणेश “Lord of Categories.” Or: “Lord of attendants (*gaṇa*),” synonymous with *Gaṇapati*. Gaṇeśa is a Mahādeva, the beloved elephant-faced Deity honored by Hindus of every sect.

**Gaṇeśa Chaturthī:** गणेश चतुर्थी The birthday of Lord Gaṇeśa, a ten-day festival of August-September that culminates in a parade called Gaṇeśa Visarjana. It is a time of rejoicing, when all Hindus worship together.

**Gaṇeśa Visarjana:** गणेश विसर्जन “Gaṇeśa departure.” A parade usually occurring on the 11th day after Gaṇeśa Chaturthī, in which the Gaṇeśa *mūrtis* made for the occasion are taken to a body of water, ceremoniously immersed and left to dissolve, representing His merger in the ocean of consciousness.

**Ganges (Gaṅgā):** गंगा India’s most sacred river, 1,557 miles long, arising in the Himalayas above Hardwar under the name Bhagiratha, and being named Gaṅgā after joining the Alakanada.

**garbhādhāna:** गर्भाधान “Womb-impregnation.” The rite anticipating conception. See: *samskāra*.

**garbhagriha:** गर्भगृह The “innermost chamber,” sanctum sanctorum, of a Hindu temple, where the primary *mūrti* is installed.

**gāyatrī:** गायत्री According with the *gāyatrī* verse form, an ancient meter of 24 syllables, generally as a triplet with eight syllables each. From *gāya*, “song.” —**Gāyatrī:** The Vedic Gāyatrī Mantra personified as a Goddess, mother of the four *Vedas*.

**Gāyatrī Mantra:** गायत्रीमन्त्र 1) Famous Vedic *mantra* used in *pūjā* and personal chanting. *Om [bhūr bhuvaḥ svaḥ] tatsavitur varenyam, bhargo devasya dhīmahi, dhiyo yo naḥ prachodayāt.* “[O Divine Beings of all three worlds,] we meditate upon the glorious splendor of the Vivifier divine. May He illumine our minds.” (*Rig Veda* 3.62.10 VE). 2) Any of a class of special *tantric mantras* called Gāyatrī. Each addresses a particular Deity.

**ghaṇṭā:** घण्टा “Bell.” Akin to *ghaṇṭ*, “to speak.” An important implement in Hindu worship (*pūjā*), used to chase away *asuras* and summon *devas* and Gods.

**ghee:** घी Hindi for clarified butter; *ghṛita* in Sanskrit. Butter that has been boiled and strained, used in temple lamps and offered in fire ceremony, *yajña*.

**go:** गो The cow, considered especially sacred for its unbounded generosity and usefulness to humans. It is a symbol of the earth as the abundant provider.

**God:** Supernal being. Either the Supreme God, Śiva, or one of the Mahādevas, great souls, who are among His creation.

**Goddess:** Female representation or manifestation of Divinity; Śakti or Devī. *Goddess* can refer to a female perception or depiction of a causal-plane being (Mahādeva) in its natural state, which is genderless, or it can refer to an astral-plane being residing in a female astral body.

**God Realization:** Direct and personal experience of the Divine within oneself. It can refer to either 1) *savikalpa samādhi* (“enstasy with form”) in its various levels, from the experience of inner light to the realization of Satchidānanda, pure consciousness, or 2) *nirvikalpa samādhi* (“enstasy without form”), union with the transcendent Absolute, Paraśiva, the Self God, beyond time, form and space. In *Dancing with Śiva*, the expression *God Realization* is used to name both of the above *samādhis*, whereas *Self Realization* refers only to *nirvikalpa samādhi*.

**Gods:** Mahādevas, “great beings of light.” In *Dancing with Śiva*, the plural form of *God* refers to extremely advanced beings existing

in their self-effulgent soul bodies in the causal plane.

**gopura:** गोपुर South Indian temple entrance tower, often quite tall with ornate carvings.

**gotra:** गोत्र “Cowshed.” Family lineage or subcaste stemming from a *ṛishi* or *satguru* and bearing his name. Originally described as several joint families sharing a common cowshed.

**grihastha:** गृहस्थ “Householder.” Family man or woman. Family of a married couple and other relatives. Pertaining to family life.

**grihastha āśrama:** गृहस्थ आश्रम “Householder stage.” See: *āśrama dharma*.

**grihastha dharma:** गृहस्थधर्म “Householder law.” The virtues and ideals of family life.

**griheśvara and grihiṇī:** गृहेश्वर गृहिणी From *griha*, “home,” hence “lord and lady of the home.” The family man, *griheśvara* (or *grihapati*), and family woman, *grihiṇī*, considered as master and mistress of their respective realms, so they may fulfill their *purusha* and *strī dharmas*.

**gross plane:** The physical world. See: *loka*, *tattva*, *world*.

**guṇa:** गुण “Strand; quality.” The three constituent principles of *prakṛiti*, primal nature. The three *guṇas* are —**sattva:** Quiescent, rarified, translucent, pervasive, reflecting the light of Pure Consciousness. —**rajas:** “Passion,” inherent in energy, movement, action, emotion, life. —**tamas:** “Darkness,” inertia, density, the force of contraction, resistance and dissolution.

**guru:** गुरु “Weighty one,” indicating an authority of great knowledge or skill. A teacher or guide in any subject, such as music, dance, sculpture, but especially religion. Often preceded by a qualifying prefix. Hence, *kulaguru* (family teacher), *vinaguru* (*viṇa* teacher) and *satguru* (spiritual preceptor). In astrology, *guru* names the planet Jupiter, also known as *Bṛihaspati*. According to the *Advayatāraka Upanishad* (14–18), *guru* means “dispeller (*gu*) of darkness (*ru*).”

**guru bhakti:** गुरुभक्ति Devotion to the teacher. The attitude of humility, love and ideation held by a student in any field of

study. In the spiritual realm, the devotee strives to see the *guru* as his higher Self.

**Guru Gītā:** गुरु गीता “Song of the *guru*.” A popular 352-verse excerpt from the *Śkanda Purāṇa*, wherein Lord Śiva tells Pārvatī of the *guru*-disciple relationship.

**Guru Jayanti:** गुरु जयन्ती Preceptor’s birthday, celebrated as an annual festival by devotees.

**gurukula:** गुरुकुल A training center where young boys live and learn in residence with their teacher. *Kula* means “family.”

**guru paramparā:** गुरुपरंपरा “Preceptorial succession” (literally, “from one to another”). A line of spiritual *gurus* in authentic succession of initiation; the chain of mystical power and authorized continuity, passed from *guru* to *guru*. Cf: *sampradāya*.

**Guru Pūrṇimā:** गुरु पूर्णिमा Occurring on the full moon of July, Guru Pūrṇimā is for devotees a day of rededication to all that the *guru* represents.

**guru-śishya system:** गुरुशिष्य “Master-disciple system.” An important education system of Hinduism whereby the teacher conveys his knowledge and tradition to a student. Such knowledge, whether it be Vedic-Āgamic art, architecture or spirituality, is imparted through the developing relationship between *guru* and disciple. See: *guru*, *guru bhakti*, *satguru*.

**H** *hamsa:* हंस “Swan;” more accurately, the high-flying wild goose *Anser indicus*. The *vāhana*, vehicle, of the God Brahmā. It has various meanings, including Supreme Soul and individual soul.

**Harihara:** हरिहर “Viṣṇu-Śiva.” Also known as Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa, an icon of the Supreme One, in which the right half is Śiva and left half is Viṣṇu, symbolizing that Śiva and Viṣṇu are not two separate Deities.

**hatha yoga:** हठयोग “Forceful yoga.” A system of physical and mental exercise developed in ancient times as a means of rejuvenation by *ṛishis* and *tapasvins*, used today in preparing the body and

mind for meditation.

**Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā:** हठयोगप्रदीपिका “Elucidation of *haṭha yoga*.”

A 14th-century text of 389 verses by Svātma-māma Yogin that describes the philosophy and practices of *haṭha yoga*.

**heart chakra:** *Anāhata chakra*. Center of direct cognition. See: *chakra*.

**heaven:** The celestial spheres, including the causal plane and the higher realms of the subtle plane, where souls rest and learn between births, and mature souls continue to evolve after *moksha*. See: *loka*.

**hell:** Naraka. An unhappy, mentally and emotionally congested, distressful area of consciousness. Hell is a state of mind that can be experienced on the physical plane or in the sub-astral plane (Naraka) after death of the physical body. In the Hindu view, the hellish experience is not permanent, but a temporary condition of one's own making.

**himsā:** हिंसा “Injury; harm; hurt.” Injuriousness, hostility—mental, verbal or physical. See: *ahimsā*.

**Hindu:** हिन्दु A follower of, or relating to, Hinduism. See: *Hinduism*.

**Hinduism (Hindu Dharma):** हिन्दुधर्म India's indigenous religious and cultural system, followed today by nearly one billion adherents, mostly in India, but with the large diaspora in many other countries. Also called Sanātana Dharma, “Eternal Religion” and Vaidika Dharma, “Religion of the *Vedas*.” It is a family of myriad faiths with four primary denominations: Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism, Śāktism and Smārtism.

**holy orders:** A divine ordination or covenant, conferring religious authority. Vows that members of a religious body make, especially a monastic order.

**homa:** होम “Fire-offering.” A ceremony of offering oblations to the Gods through the medium of fire in a sanctified fire pit, *homakuṇḍa*, usually made of earthen bricks. *Homa* rites are enjoined in the *Vedas*, *Āgamas* and *Dharma* and *Gr̥ihya Śāstras*.

**hrī:** ह्री “Remorse; modesty.” See: *yama-niyama*.

**human dharma:** The natural growth and expression through four stages of life. Known as *āśrama dharma*.

**I icchā śakti:** इच्छाशक्ति “Desire; will.” See: *Śakti, triśūla*.

**idā nāḍi:** इडानाडी “Soothing channel.” The feminine psychic current flowing along the spine. See: *kuṇḍalinī, nāḍī, odic, piṅgalā*.

**immanent:** Indwelling; inherent and operating within.

**impersonal God:** God in His perfections of Pure Consciousness (Parāśakti) and Absolute Reality beyond all attributes (Paraśiva) wherein He is not a person. (Whereas, in His third perfection, Parameśvara, Śiva is someone, has a body and performs actions, has will, dances, etc.)

**Indra:** इन्द्र “Ruler.” Vedic God of rain and thunder, warrior king of the *devas*.

**Indus Valley:** Region of the Indus River, now in Pakistan, where in 1924 archeologists discovered the remains of a high civilization which flourished between 5000 and 1000 BCE.

**instinctive:** “Natural” or “innate.” From the Latin *instinctus*, “impelling, instigating.” The drives and impulses that order the animal world and the physical and lower *astral* aspects of humans—for example, self-preservation, procreation, hunger and thirst, as well as the emotions of greed, hatred, anger, fear, lust and jealousy.

**instinctive mind:** *Manas chitta*. The lower mind, which controls the basic faculties of perception, movement, as well as ordinary thought and emotion.

**instrumental cause:** *Sahakāri kāraṇa*. Cosmologically, the means of implementing creation.

**internalized worship:** *Yoga*. Worship or contact with God and Gods via meditation and contemplation rather than through external ritual.

**intuition (to intuit):** Direct understanding or cognition, which

bypasses the process of reason.

**invocation (to invoke):** A “calling or summoning,” as to a God, saint, etc., for blessings and assistance. Also, a formal prayer or chant. See: *mantra*.

**Iraivan:** இறைவன் “Worshipful one; divine one.” One of the most ancient Tamil appellations for God. See: *San Marga Sanctuary*.

**Iraivan Temple:** See: *San Marga Sanctuary*.

**Ishta Devatā:** इष्टदेवता “Cherished or chosen Deity.” The object of one’s special pious attention.

**Īśvarapūjana:** ईश्वरपूजन “Worship.” See: *yama-niyama*.

**Itihāsa:** इतिहास “So it was.” Epic history, particularly the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* (of which the famed *Bhagavad Gītā* is a part). This term sometimes includes the *Purāṇas*, especially the *Skānda Purāṇa* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (or *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*).

**Jaimini:** जैमिनि Founder of Mimāṃsā Darśana. See: *śaḍ darśana*.

**Jainism: (Jaina)** जैन An ancient non-Vedic religion of India made prominent by the teachings of Mahavira (“Great Hero”), ca 500 BCE. The *Jain Āgamas* teach reverence for all life, vegetarianism and strict renunciation for ascetics.

**japa:** जप “Recitation.” Concentrated repeating of a *mantra*, silently or aloud, often counting on a *mālā* or strand of beads. A cure for pride and arrogance, jealousy, fear and confusion.

**jātakarma:** जातकर्म “Rite of birth.” See: *saṁskāra*.

**jāti:** जाति “Birth; genus; community, caste.” See: *varṇa dharma*.

**jayanti:** जयन्ती “Birthday.” See: *Guru Jayanti*.

**jīva:** जीव “Living, existing.” From *jīv*, “to live.” The individual soul, *ātman*, during its embodied state, bound by the three *malas* (*āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā*).

**jīvanmukta:** जीवन्मुक्त “Liberated soul.” One who has attained *nirvikalpa samādhi*—the realization of the Self, Paraśiva—and is liberated from rebirth while living in a human body. (Contrasted with *videhamukta*, one liberated at the point of death.)

**jīvanmukti:** जीवन्मुक्ति “Liberation while living.” The state of the *jīvanmukta*.

**jīvayajña:** जीवयज्ञ “Self sacrifice.” See: *yajña*.

**jñāna:** ज्ञान “Knowledge; wisdom.” The matured state of the soul. It is the wisdom that comes as an aftermath of the *kuṇḍalinī* breaking through the door of *Brahman* into the realization of Paraśiva, Absolute Reality. *Jñāna* is the awakened, superconscious state (*kāraṇa chitta*) flowing into daily life situations.

**jñāna pāda:** ज्ञानपाद “Stage of wisdom.” The last of four successive *pādas* (stages); the culmination of the third stage, the *yoga pāda*. Also names the knowledge section of each *Āgama*.

**jñāna śakti:** ज्ञानशक्ति “Power of wisdom.” One of Śiva’s three primary *śaktis*. Also names Lord Kārttikeya’s *vel*.

**jñāna yoga:** ज्ञानयोग “Union of knowledge.” The esoteric spiritual practices of the fully enlightened being, or *jñānī*. An alternative meaning, popularized by Swami Vivekananda, is the quest for cognition through intellectual religious study, as one of four alternate paths to truth, the other three being *bhakti yoga*, *karma yoga* and *rāja yoga*. See: *jñāna*.

**Jñāneśvarī:** ज्ञानेश्वरी Foremost religious treatise in the Marāṭhi language. Written by the Nātha saint Jnanesvar (or Jnanadeva) about 1290. It is a verse-by-verse commentary on the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

**jñānī:** ज्ञानी “Sage.” Possessing *jñāna*. See: *jñāna*.

**joint family:** कुटुम्बा or *kula*. The Hindu social unit consisting of several generations of kindred living together under the same roof or in a joining compound.

**jyotiṣa:** ज्योतिष From *jyoti*, “light.” “The science of the lights (or stars),” Hindu astrology, analyzing events and circumstances, delineating character and determining auspicious moments, according to the positions and movements of heavenly bodies.

**jyotiṣa śāstrī:** ज्योतिषशास्त्री “Astrologer.” A person well versed in the science of *jyotiṣa*. See: *jyotiṣa*.

**Jyotiṣa Vedāṅga:** ज्योतिषवेदाङ्ग “Veda-limb of celestial science (astronomy-astrology).” Ancient texts of astronomy and astrology



for understanding the cosmos and determining proper timing for Vedic rites.

**K** **Kadaitswami (Kadaitswāmi):** கடையிற்சுவாமி “Marketplace swāmi.” The 159th *satguru* of the Nandinātha Sampradāya’s Kailāsa Paramparā. Born ca 1804; attained *mahāsamādhi* October 13, 1891. Renouncing his career as a judge in Bangalore, South India, Kadaitswami became a *sannyāsin* and trained under the Rishi from the Himalayas, who sent him on mission to Sri Lanka. He performed severe *tapas* on an island off the Jaffna coast, awakening many *siddhis*. For decades he spurred the Sri Lankan Śaivites to greater spirituality through inspired talks and demonsrating *siddhis*. He initiated Chellappaswami as the next *satguru* in the *paramparā*. See: *Kailāsa Paramparā*.

**Kailasa (Kailāsa):** कैलास “Crystalline” or “abode of bliss.” The Himalayan peak in Western Tibet; the earthly abode of Lord Śiva, a pilgrimage destination for Hindus and Tibetan Buddhists.

**Kailāsa Paramparā:** कैलासपरंपरा A spiritual lineage of 163 *siddhas*, a major stream of the Nandinātha Sampradāya, proponents of the ancient philosophy of monistic Śaiva Siddhānta. The first of these masters was Maharishi Nandinatha (or Nandikesvara) 2,250 years ago, *satguru* to the great Tirumular, ca 200 BCE, and seven other disciples (as stated in the *Tirumantiram*). The lineage continued down the centuries and is alive today—the first recent *siddha* known being the “Rishi from the Himalayas,” so named because he descended from those holy mountains. In South India, he initiated Kadaitswami (ca 1810–1875), who in turn initiated Chellappaswami (1840–1915). Chellappan passed the mantle of authority to Siva Yogaswami (1872–1964), who in 1949 initiated Sivaya Subramuniyaswami (1927–2001), who in 2001 ordained the current preceptor, Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami (1942–). See: *Chellappaswami, Kadaitswami, Nātha Sampradāya, Patanjali, Subramuniyaswami, Tirumular, Vyaghrapada, Yogaswami*.

**kaivalya:** कैवल्य “Absolute oneness, aloneness; perfect detachment,

freedom.” Liberation. *Kaivalya* is the term used by Patanjali and others in the *yoga* tradition to name the goal and fulfillment of *yoga*, the state of complete detachment from transmigration. It is virtually synonymous with *moksha*.

**kāla:** काल 1) “Time,” “calculation.” 2) “Black” (of a black or dark blue color); “death.”

**kalā-64** (*chatuḥ shashṭi kalā*): चतुः षष्टिकला “Sixty-four arts.” A classical curriculum of sacred sciences, studies, arts and skills of cultured living listed in various Hindu *śāstras*.

**kalaśa:** कलश “Water pot,” “pitcher,” “jar.” Also names the pot-like spires that adorn temple roofs.

**Kālī:** काली “Black” Goddess. A form of Śakti in Her fierce aspect, worshiped by Śāktās. She is dark, nude, primordial and fiercely powerful, as of a naked energy untamed. The incomparable protectress, champion of *sādhana* and mother of liberation.

**kāma:** काम “Pleasure, love; desire.” Cultural, intellectual and sexual fulfillment. One of four human goals, *purushārtha*. See: *purushārtha*.

**kamaṇḍalu:** कमण्डलु “Vessel, water jar.” Traditionally earthen or wooden, carried by *sannyāsins*, it symbolizes the renunciate’s simple, self-contained life.

**Kāma Sūtra(s):** कामसूत्र “Aphorisms on pleasure.” A fifth-century text by Vātsyāyana on erotics.

**Kāmika Āgama:** कामिक आगम An important scripture among the 28 Śaiva Siddhānta Āgamas, widely available today. The verses from its *kriyā pāda*, on ritual and temple construction, are a crucial reference for South Indian priests.

**kapha:** कफ “Biological water.” One of the three bodily humors, called *dosha*, *kapha* is known as the water humor. Principle of cohesion. *Kapha* gives bodily structure and stability, lubricates, heals and bestows immunity. See: *āyurveda*, *dosha*.

**karma:** कर्म “Action,” “deed.” 1) any act or deed; 2) the principle of cause and effect; 3) a consequence or “fruit of action” (*karmaphala*) or “after effect” (*uttaraphala*), which sooner or later returns

upon the doer. What we sow, we shall reap in this or future lives. Selfish, hateful acts (*pāpakarma* or *kukarma*) will bring suffering. Benevolent actions (*puṇyakarma* or *sukarma*) will bring loving reactions. *Karma* is threefold: *sañchita*, *prārabdha* and *kriyamāna*. —***sañchita karma***: “Accumulated actions.” The sum of all *karmas* of this life and past lives. —***prārabdha karma***: “Actions begun; set in motion.” That portion of *sañchita karma* that is bearing fruit and shaping the events and conditions of the current life, including the nature of one’s bodies, personal tendencies and associations. —***kriyamāna karma***: “Being made.”

***karṇavedha***: कर्णविध “Ear-piercing.” See: *saṁskāra*.

***Kārttikeya***: कार्तिकेय Child of the Pleiades, from *Kṛittikā*, “Pleiades.” A son of Śiva. Also known as Murugan, Kumāra, Skanda, Shanmukhanātha, Subramanya and more, He is the God of religion, the transformation of the instinctive into a divine wisdom through the practice of *yoga*. He wields the *vel* of *jñāna śakti*, His Power to vanquish darkness or ignorance.

***Kashmīr Śaivism***: कश्मीरशैव See: *Śaivism*, *six schools*.

***kathā***: कथा “Story; discussion.” Also, the literary form of storytelling. *Kathakas* are bards, storytellers.

***kavadi***: കാവடி A penance offered to Lord Murugan-Kārttikeya, especially during Tai Pusam, carrying in procession a heavy, decorated, wooden object from which are hung pots of milk for His *abhisheka*. The penitent’s tongue and other parts of the body are often pierced with small silver spears or hooks.

***kavi***: കാവി “Ocher-saffron color” of the *sannyāsin*’s robes, a Tamil term referring to the color of the robes of *sādhus* who sit, meditate or live on the banks of the Ganges. The Sanskrit equivalent is *kāshāya*.

***keśānta***: केशान्त “Beard-shaving.” See: *saṁskāra*.

***kirtana***: कीर्तन “Praising.” Devotional singing and dancing in celebration of God, Gods and *guru*.

***konrai***: கொன்றை The Golden Shower tree, *Cassia fistula*; symbol of Śiva’s cascading golden grace.

**kośa:** कोश “Sheath; vessel, container; layer.” Philosophically, five sheaths through which the soul functions simultaneously in the various planes or levels of existence. The *kośas* are —**annamaya kośa:** “Sheath composed of food.” The physical or odic body, coarsest of sheaths in comparison to the faculties of the soul, yet indispensable for evolution and Self Realization, because only within it can all fourteen *chakras* fully function. See: *chakra*. —**prāṇamaya kośa:** “Sheath composed of *prāṇa* (vital force).” The *prāṇic* or health body, or the etheric body or etheric double, co-existing within the physical body as its source of life, breath and vitality, and is its connection with the astral body. *Prāṇa* moves in the *prāṇamaya kośa* as five primary currents or *vayus*, “vital airs or winds.” *Prāṇamaya kośa* disintegrates at death along with the physical body. See: *prāṇa* —**manomaya kośa:** “Mind-formed sheath.” The lower astral body, from *manas*, “thought, will, wish.” The instinctive-intellectual sheath of ordinary thought, desire and emotion. The *manomaya kośa* takes form as the physical body develops and is discarded in the inner worlds before rebirth. —**vijñānamaya kośa:** “Sheath of cognition.” The mental or cognitive-intuitive sheath, also called the actinodic sheath. It is the vehicle of higher thought, *vijñāna*—understanding, knowing, direct cognition, wisdom, intuition and creativity. —**ānandamaya kośa:** “Body of bliss.” The intuitive-superconscious sheath or actinic-causal body. The inmost soul form (*svarūpa*), the ultimate foundation of all life, intelligence and higher faculties. Its essence is Parāśakti (Pure Consciousness) and Paraśiva (the Absolute). It is the soul itself, a body of light, also called *kāraṇa śarīra*, causal body, and *karmāśaya*, holder of *karmas* of this and all past lives. *Kāraṇa chitta*, “causal mind,” names the soul’s superconscious mind, of which Parāśakti (or Satchidānanda) is the rarified substratum.

**Kṛishṇa:** कृष्ण “Black.” Also related to *kṛishṭiḥ*, meaning “drawing, attracting.” One of the most popular Gods of the Hindu pantheon. He is worshiped by Vaishṇavas as the eighth *avatāra*,

incarnation, of Viṣṇu.

**Kṛittikā Dīpa:** कृत्तिकादीप A joyous one-day festival on the Kṛittikā *nakshatra* (Pleiades constellation), in November-December, when God Śiva is worshiped as an infinite pillar of light. Great bonfires are lit at night on hills and in villages in India and elsewhere to represent the divine, all-permeating light of Parāśakti.

**kriyā:** क्रिया “Action.” 1) Doing of any kind. Specifically, religious action, especially rites or ceremonies. 2) Involuntary physical movements occurring during meditation that are pretended or caused by lack of emotional self-control or by the premature or unharnessed arousal of the *kuṇḍalinī*. 3) *Haṭha yoga* techniques for cleansing the mucous membranes. 4) The second stage of the Śaiva path, religious action, *kriyā pāda*. See: *pāda*.

**kriyamāna karma:** क्रियमानकर्म “Actions being made.” See: *karma*.

**kriyā pāda:** क्रियापाद “Stage of religious action; worship.” The stage of worship and devotion, second of four progressive stages of maturation on the Śaiva Siddhānta path of attainment. See: *pāda*.

**kriyā śakti:** क्रियाशक्ति “Action power.” The universal force of doing.

**kṣamā:** क्षमा “Forebearance.” See: *yama-niyama*.

**kṣatriya:** क्षत्रिय “Governing; sovereign.” The social class of law-makers, law-enforcers and military. See: *varṇa dharma*.

**Kulārṇava Tantra:** कुलार्णवतन्त्र A leading scripture of the Kaula school of Śāktism focusing on ways to liberation, with chapters on the *guru-śiṣya* relationship.

**Kumāra:** कुमार “Virgin youth; ever-youthful.” Lord Kārttikeya as an eternal bachelor. See: *Kārttikeya*.

**kumbha:** कुम्भ “Jar or pot; water vessel.”

**kuṇḍalinī:** कुण्डलिनी “She who is coiled; serpent power.” The primordial cosmic energy in every individual which, at first, lies coiled like a serpent at the base of the spine and eventually, through the practice of *yoga*, rises up the *suṣumṇā nāḍī*. As it

risers, the *kuṇḍalinī* awakens each successive *chakra*. *Nirvikalpa samādhi*, enlightenment, comes as it pierces through the door of Brahman at the core of the *sahasrāra* and enters! *Kuṇḍalinī śakti* then returns to rest in any one of the seven *chakras*. Śivasāyujya is complete when the *kuṇḍalinī* arrives back in the *sahasrāra* and remains coiled in this crown *chakra*.

**kuṇḍalinī yoga:** कुण्डलिनीयोग “Uniting the serpent power.” Advanced meditative practices and *sādhana* techniques, a part of *rāja yoga*, performed to deliberately arouse the *kuṇḍalinī* power and guide it up the spine into the crown *chakra*, *sahasrāra*. In its highest form, this *yoga* is the natural result of *sādhana*s and *tapas* well performed, rather than a distinct system of striving and teaching in its own right.

**kuṅkuma:** कुंकुम “Saffron; red.” The red powder, made of turmeric and lime, worn by Hindus as the *pottu* or *bindu*, dot, at the point of the third eye on the forehead. The saffron plant, *Crocus sativus*, and its pollen.

**kuttuvilaku:** குத்துவிளக்கு A standing oil lamp found in the temple, shrine room or home. *Dīpastambha* in Sanskrit.

**Lakshmi:** लक्ष्मी “Mark or sign,” often of success or prosperity. Śakti, the Universal Mother, as Goddess of wealth. The mythological consort of Viṣṇu. Prayers are offered to Lakshmi for wealth, beauty and peace.

**left-handed:** *Vāma mārga*. Denoting *tantric* practices where the instincts and intellect are transcended and detachment is sought through practices and behavior contrary to orthodox social norms. See: *tantra*.

**lekhaprārtha havana:** लेखप्रार्थहवन “Written-prayer-burning rite.” The practice of sending written prayers to the Gods by burning them in a sanctified fire in a temple or shrine.

**liberal Hinduism:** A synonym for *Smārtism* and the closely related neo-Indian religion. See: *neo-Indian religion*, *Smārtism*.

**liberation:** *Moksha*, release from the bonds of *pāśa*, after which the

soul is liberated from *saṁsāra* (the round of births and deaths). In Śaiva Siddhānta, *pāśa* is the threefold bondage of *āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā*, which limit and confine the soul to the reincarnational cycle so that it may evolve. *Moksha* is freedom from the fettering power of these bonds, which do not cease to exist, but no longer have the power to fetter or bind the soul.

**Liṅga:** लिङ्ग “Mark.” See: *Śivaliṅga*, *svayambhū Liṅga*.

**liturgy:** Proper, prescribed forms of ritual.

**loka:** लोक “World, habitat, realm, or plane of existence.” From *loc*, “to shine, be bright, visible.” A dimension of manifest existence; cosmic region. Each *loka* reflects or involves a particular range of consciousness. The three primary *lokas* are 1) —**Bhūloka:** “Earth world.” The world perceived through the five senses, also called the gross plane, as it is the most dense of the worlds. 2) —**Antarloka:** “Inner or in-between world.” Known in English as the subtle or astral plane, the intermediate dimension between the physical and causal worlds, where souls in their astral bodies sojourn between incarnations and when they sleep. 3) —**Śivaloka:** “World of Śiva,” and of the Gods and highly evolved souls. The causal plane, also called *Kāraṇaloka*, existing deep within the *Antarloka* at a higher level of vibration, it is a world of super-consciousness and extremely refined energy. It is the plane of creativity and intuition, the quantum level of the universe, where souls exist in self-effulgent bodies made of actinic particles of light. It is here that God and Gods move and lovingly guide the evolution of all the worlds and shed their ever-flowing grace. See: *three worlds*.

**M macrocosm:** “Great world or universe.” See: *microcosm-macrocosm*, *piṇḍa*, *three worlds*.

**Madhva (Mādhva):** माध्व South Indian Vaishṇava saint (1197–1278) who expounded a purely dualistic (pluralistic) Vedānta.

**mahā:** महा An adjective or prefix meaning “great.”

**Mahābhārata:** महाभारत “Great (Epic) of India.” The world’s longest

epic poem. The story of two kingdoms, the Pandavas and Kauravas, and their great battle of Kurukshetra near modern Delhi in approximately 1424 BCE. The *Bhagavad Gītā* is one section of the work. The *Mahābhārata* is revered as scripture by Vaiṣṇavites and Smārtas. See: *Bhagavad Gītā, Itihāsa*.

**Mahādeva:** महादेव “Great shining one; God.” Referring either to God Śiva or any of the highly evolved beings who live in the Śivaloka in their natural, effulgent soul bodies.

**Mahākāla:** महाकाल “Great time,” or “dissolver of time.” A form of Śiva, Mahākāla is Time beyond time who devours all things and forms and, by so doing, helps the soul transcend all dualities.

**mahāmaṇḍapa:** महामण्डप “Great hall.” Main, outer assembly hall in the temple where devotees gather for ceremony.

**mahāpralaya:** महाप्रलय “Great dissolution.” Total annihilation of the universe at the end of a *mahākālpā*. The absorption of all existence, including time, space and individual consciousness, all the *lokas* and their inhabitants into God Śiva. Then Śiva alone exists in His three perfections, until He again issues forth creation. During this incredibly vast period there are many partial dissolutions, *pralayas*, when either the Bhūloka or the Bhūloka and the Antarloka are destroyed. See: *cosmic cycle*.

**mahāprasthāna:** महाप्रस्थान “Great departure.” Death.

**mahārāja:** महाराज “Great king.” Indian monarch. Title of respect for political or (in modern times) spiritual leaders.

**mahāsamādhi:** महासमाधि “Great ecstasy.” The death, or dropping off of the physical body, of a great soul, an event occasioned by tremendous blessings. Also names the shrine in which the remains of a great soul are entombed. **mahāsamādhi day:** Anniversary of the transition of a great soul.

**Mahāśivarātri:** महाशिवरात्रि “Śiva’s great night.” Śaivism’s foremost festival, celebrated on the night before the new moon in February-March. Fasting and an all-night vigil are observed, chanting, praying, meditating and worshiping Śiva as the Source and Self of all.



**mahātma:** महात्मा “Great soul.” Honorific title for those held in highest esteem, especially saints.

**mahāvākya:** महावाक्य “Great saying.” A profound aphorism from scripture or a holy person.

**Maheśvara:** महेश्वर “Great Lord.” The name of Śiva’s energy of veiling grace, one of five aspects of Parameśvara, the Primal Soul. *Maheśvara* is also a popular name for Lord Śiva as Primal Soul and personal Lord.

**mala:** मल “Impurity.” An important term in Śaivism referring to three bonds, called *pāśa*—*āṇava*, *karma*, and *māyā*—which limit the soul, preventing it from knowing its true, divine nature. See: *liberation*, *pāśa*.

**mālā:** माला “Garland.” A strand of beads for holy recitation, *japa*, usually made of *rudrāksha*, *tulasī*, sandalwood or crystal. Also a flower garland.

**maṇḍala:** मण्डल “Circle; orb;” “mystic diagram.” A circular diagram without beginning or end, upon which one meditates. A tapestry, picture or grouping of words used in meditation to enter the realms depicted. Name of the chapters of the *Ṛig Veda Samhitā*.

**maṇḍapa:** मण्डप From *maṇḍ*, “to deck, adorn.” Temple precinct, compound, open hall or chamber, e.g., *mukhamāṇḍapa*, “front chamber.”

**mandira:** मन्दिर “Temple; abode.”

**maṅgala kriyā:** मङ्गलक्रिया “Auspicious action or practice.” Hindu culture.

**maṇipūra chakra:** मणिपूरचक्र “Wheeled city of jewels.” Solar-plexus center of willpower. See: *chakra*.

**mankolam:** மாங்கோலம் “Mango design.” The paisley, a stylized image of the mango, symbol of auspiciousness, associated with Lord Gaṇeśa.

**manomaya kośa:** मनोमयकोश “Mind-made sheath.” The instinctive-intellectual aspect of the soul’s subtle body (*sūkshma śarīra*), also called the odic-astral sheath. It is the sheath of ordinary thought, desire and emotion. The *manomaya kośa* is made up of odic *prāṇa*

and is almost an exact duplicate of the physical body. This is the sheath of the subconscious mind; it can be easily disturbed and is sometimes called the emotional body. See: *kośa*.

**mantra:** मन्त्र “Mystic formula.” A sound, syllable, word or phrase endowed with special power, usually drawn from scripture.

**Mariyamman:** மாரியம்மன் “Smallpox Goddess,” protectress from plagues. See: *Amman*.

**material cause:** *Upādāna kāraṇa*. The substance of creation, *māyā*, Śiva’s “mirific energy.”

**mati:** मति “Cognition, understanding; conviction.” See: *yama-niyama*.

**maya:** मय “Consisting or made of,” as in *manomaya*, “made of mind.”

**māyā:** माया “She who measures;” or “mirific energy.” The substance emanated from Śiva through which the world of form is manifested. Hence all creation is also termed *māyā*. It is the cosmic creative force, the principle of manifestation, ever in the process of creation, preservation and dissolution.

**mayūra:** मयूर “Peacock.” The *vāhana*, or mount, of Lord Kārttikeya, symbolizing effulgent beauty and religion in full glory.

**meditation:** *Dhyāna*. Sustained concentration. Meditation describes a quiet, alert, powerfully concentrated state wherein new knowledge and insights are awakened from within as awareness focuses one-pointedly on an object or specific line of thought.

**mediumship:** Act or practice of serving as a channel through which inner world beings communicate.

**mendicant:** A beggar; a wandering monk who lives on alms.

**mental body (sheath):** The higher-mind layer of the subtle or astral body in which the soul functions in the Maharloka of the Antarloka or subtle plane. In Sanskrit, the mental body is *viññānamaya kośa*, “sheath of cognition.” See: *kośa*, *subtle body*.

**mental plane:** Names the refined strata of the subtle world. It is called Maharloka or Devaloka, realm of *anāhata chakra*. Here the soul is shrouded in the mental or cognitive sheath,

*vijñānamaya kośa.*

**metaphysics:** 1) The branch of philosophy dealing with first causes and nature of reality. 2) The science of mysticism.

**Meykandar:** மெய்கண்டார் “Truth seer.” The 13th-century Tamil theologian, author (or translator from the *Raurava Āgama*) of the *Śivajñānabodham*. Founder of the Meykandar Sampradāya of pluralistic Śaiva Siddhānta. See: *Śaiva Siddhānta*.

**Meykandar Śāstras:** Fourteen Tamil works on Śaiva Siddhānta written during the 13th and 14th centuries by seven authors—Meykandar, Arulnandi, Uyyavanda Deva I and II, Umapati, Sivajnana (Śivajñāna) Yogin and Manavasagam Kadandar.

**Mīmāṃsā:** मीमांसा “Inquiry.” See: *śaḍ darśana*.

**mind (three phases):** A perspective of mind as instinctive, intellectual and superconscious. —**instinctive mind.** *Manas chitta*, the seat of desire and governor of sensory and motor organs. —**intellectual mind.** *Buddhi chitta*, the faculty of thought and intelligence. —**superconscious mind:** *Kāraṇa chitta*, the strata of intuition, benevolence and spiritual sustenance. Its most refined essence is Parāśakti, or Satchidānanda, all-knowing, omnipresent consciousness, the One transcendental, self-luminous, divine mind common to all souls.

**mind (five states):** A view of the mind in five parts. —**conscious mind:** *Jāgrat chitta* (“wakeful consciousness”). The ordinary, waking, thinking state of mind. —**subconscious mind:** *Saṁskāra chitta* (“impression mind”). The part of mind “beneath” the conscious mind, the storehouse or recorder of all experience (whether remembered consciously or not)—the holder of past impressions, reactions and desires. Also, the seat of involuntary physiological processes. —**subsubconscious mind:** *Vāsanā chitta* (“mind of subliminal traits”). The area of the subconscious mind formed when two thoughts or experiences of the same rate of intensity are sent into the subconscious at different times and, intermingling, give rise to a new and totally different rate of vibration. —**superconscious mind:** *Kāraṇa chitta*. The mind of

light, the all-knowing intelligence of the soul. At its deepest level, the superconscious is Parāśakti, or Satchidānanda, the Divine Mind of God Śiva. —**subsuperconscious mind:** *Anukāraṇa chitta*. The superconscious mind working through the conscious and subconscious states, which brings forth intuition, clarity and insight.

**mirific:** “Wonder-making; magical; astonishing.”

**mitāhāra:** मिताहार “Measured eating; moderate appetite,” a requisite for good health and success in *yoga*. An ideal portion per meal is one a *kuḍava*, no more than would fill the two hands held side by side and slightly cupped piled high. See: *yama-niyama*.

**modaka:** मोदक “Sweets.” A round, lemon-sized sweet made of rice, coconut, sugar, etc. It is a favorite treat of Gaṇeśa. Esoterically, it corresponds to *siddhi* (attainment or fulfillment).

**moksha:** मोक्ष “Liberation.” Release from transmigration, *saṃsāra*, the round of births and deaths, which occurs after *karma* has been resolved and *nirvikalpa samādhi*—realization of the Self, Paraśiva—has been attained. Same as *mukti*. See: *Purushārtha*.

**monism:** “Doctrine of oneness.” 1) The philosophical view that there is only one ultimate substance or principle. 2) The view that reality is a unified whole without independent parts. See: *dvaita-advaita, pluralism*.

**monistic theism:** Advaita Īśvaravāda. The doctrine that reality is a one whole or existence without independent parts, coupled with theism, the belief that God exists as a real, conscious, personal Supreme Being—two perspectives ordinarily considered contradictory or mutually exclusive, since theism implies dualism.

**monotheism:** “Doctrine of one God.” Contrasted with polytheism, meaning belief in many Gods. The term *monotheism* covers a wide range of philosophical positions, from exclusive (or pure) monotheism, which recognizes only one God (such as in Semitic faiths), to inclusive monotheism, which also accepts the existence of other Gods. Generally speaking, the sects of Hinduism are inclusively monotheistic in their belief in a one Supreme God,

and in their reverence for other Gods, or Mahādevas. However, such terms which arose out of Western philosophy do not really describe the fullness of Hindu thinking. See: *Advaita Īśvaravāda*, *monistic theism*, *Pati-paśu-pāśa*.

**mudrā:** मुद्रा “Seal.” Esoteric hand gestures which express specific energies or powers. Usually accompanied by precise visualizations, *mudrās* are a vital element of ritual worship (*pūjā*), dance and *yoga*. See: *abhaya mudrā*, *añjali mudrā*.

**muhūrta:** मुहूर्त “Moment,” “hour.” 1) A period of time. 2) A certain division of a day or night. *Muhūrtas* vary slightly in length as the lengths of days and nights change through the year. 3) *Muhūrta* also refers to the astrological science of determining the most auspicious periods for specific activities. See: *auspiciousness*, *brāhma muhūrta*, *sandhyā upāsanā*.

**mukti:** मुक्ति “Release,” “liberation.” A synonym for *moksha*.

**mūlādhāra chakra:** मूलधारचक्र “Root-support wheel.” Four-petaled psychic center at the base of the spine; governs memory. See: *chakra*.

**muni:** मुनि “Sage.” A sage or *sādhu*, especially one vowed to complete silence or who speaks but rarely and who seeks stillness of mind. A hermit. The term is related to *mauna*, “silence.” In the hymns of the *Rig Veda*, *munis* are mystic shamans associated with the God Rudra.

**mūrti:** मूर्ति “Form; manifestation, embodiment, personification.” An image, icon or effigy of God or a God used during worship.

**Murugan:** முருகன் “Beautiful one,” a favorite name of Kārttikeya among the Tamils of South India, Sri Lanka and elsewhere. See: *Kārttikeya*.

**Mūshika:** मूषिक From *mūsh*, “to steal.” The mouse, Lord Gaṇeśa’s mount, traditionally associated with abundance. Symbolically, the mouse carries Lord Gaṇeśa’s grace into every corner of the mind. See: *Gaṇeśa*, *vāhana*.

**mythology:** Body of tales and legends. All the myths of a given people, culture or religion. India’s mythology is among the world’s

most bountiful. See: *folk narratives, kathā*.

**N** *nāda*: नाद “Sound; tone, vibration.” Metaphysically, the mystic sounds of the Eternal, of which the highest is the transcendent, Soundless Sound, Paranāda, the first vibration from which creation emanates. From Paranāda comes Praṇava, Aum, and further evolutes of *nāda*. These are experienced by the meditator as the *nādanāḍī śakti*, “energy current of sound,” heard pulsing through the nerve system as a steady high-pitched *hum*, much like a *tambura*, an electrical transformer, a swarm of bees or a *śruti* box. See: *Aum, praṇava*.

**nāḍī**: नाडी “Conduit; river.” A nerve fiber or energy channel of the subtle (inner) bodies of man. It is said there are 72,000 *nāḍīs*. These interconnect the *chakras*. The three main *nāḍīs* are *iḍā*, *piṅgalā* and *sushumṇā*. —*iḍā*, also known as *chandra* (moon) *nāḍī*, is pink in color. Its flows downward, ending on the left side of the body. This current is feminine in nature and is the channel of physical-emotional energy. —*piṅgalā*, also known as *sūrya* (sun) *nāḍī*, is blue in color. It flows upward, ending on the right side of the body. This current is masculine in nature and is the channel of intellectual-mental energy. —*sushumṇā* is the major nerve current which passes through the spinal column from the *mūlādhāra chakra* at the base to the *sahasrāra* at the crown of the head. It is the channel of *kuṇḍalinī*.

**nāga**: नाग “Serpent,” often the cobra; symbol of the *kuṇḍalinī* coiled on the *mūlādhāra chakra*.

**naivedya**: नैवेद्य Food offered to the Deity at the temple or home altar.

**nakshatra**: नक्षत्र “Star cluster.” Central to astrological determinations, the *nakshatras* are 27 star-clusters, constellations, which lie along the ecliptic, or path of the sun. An individual’s *nakshatra*, or birth star, is the constellation the moon was aligned with at the time of birth. See: *jyotiṣa*.

**nāmadīkshā**: नामदीक्षा “Name initiation.” Also known as

*nāmakaraṇa saṁskāra*. See: *saṁskāra*.

**Namah Śivāya:** नमः शिवाय “Adoration (homage) to Śiva.” The supreme *mantra* of Śaivism, known as the *Pañchākshara*, or “five syllables.”

**nāmakaraṇa:** नामकरण “Name giving.” See: *saṁskāra*.

**namaskāra:** नमस्कार “Reverent salutations.” The traditional Hindu verbal greeting and *mudrā* in which the palms are joined together and held before the heart or raised to the level of the forehead.

**namaste:** नमस्ते “Reverent salutations to you.” A traditional verbal greeting. A form of *namas*, meaning “bowing, obeisance.” See: *namaskāra*.

**Nandi:** नन्दि “The joyful.” A white bull with a black tail who is the *vāhana*, or mount, of Lord Śiva, symbol of the powerful instinctive force tamed by Him. Nandi is the perfect devotee, the soul of man, kneeling humbly before God Śiva, ever concentrated on Him.

**Nandinatha (Nandinātha):** नन्दिनाथ “Lord of Nandi.” A name of Śiva. Also the first historically known *guru* of the Nandinātha Sampradāya. See: *Kailāsa Paramparā*, *Nātha Sampradāya*.

**Nandinātha Sampradāya:** नन्दिनाथसंप्रदाय See: *Nātha Sampradāya*.

**Naraka:** नरक Abode of darkness. Literally, “pertaining to man.” The nether worlds. Equivalent to the Western term *hell*, a gross region of the Antarloka. Naraka is a congested, distressful area where demonic beings and young souls may sojourn until they resolve the darksome *karmas* they have created. Here beings suffer the consequences of their own misdeeds in previous lives. Naraka is understood as having seven regions, called *tala*, corresponding to the states of consciousness of the seven lower *chakras*.

**Nārāyaṇa:** नारायण “Abode of men.” A name of Lord Viṣṇu.

**nāstika:** नास्तिक “One who denies; unbeliever.” Opposite of *āstika*, “one who affirms.” Traditions that reject and deny the scriptural authority of the *Vedas*.

**Naṭarāja:** नटराज “King of Dance, or King of Dancers,” Śiva, the Primal Soul, Parameśvara, as the power, energy and life of all that

exists, Śiva's intricate state of Being in Manifestation.

**Natchintanai:** நஞ்சிந்தனை The collected songs of Sage Yogaswami (1872–1964) of Sri Lanka, extolling the *satguru*, Lord Śiva, *dharma* and Self Realization. See: *Kailāsa Paramparā*.

**Nātha:** नाथ “Master, lord; adept.” An ancient Himalayan tradition of Śaiva-yoga mysticism whose first historically known exponent was Nandikesvara (ca 250 BCE). *Nātha*—Self-Realized adept—designates the extraordinary ascetic masters (or devotees) of this school.

**Nātha Sampradāya:** नाथसंप्रदाय “Traditional doctrine of knowledge of masters,” a philosophical and *yogic* tradition of Śaivism whose origins are unknown. This oldest of Śaivite *sampradāyas* existing today consists of two major streams: the Nandinātha and the Ādinātha. The Nandinātha Sampradāya has had as exemplars Maharishi Nandinatha and his disciples: Patanjali (author of the *Yoga Sūtras*) and Tirumular (author of *Tirumantiram*). Among its representatives today are the successive *siddhars* of the Kailāsa Paramparā. The Ādinātha lineage's known exemplars are Mahari-shi Adinatha, Matsyendranatha and Gorakshanatha, who founded a well-known order of *yogīs*. See: *Kailāsa Paramparā*.

**Nayanar:** நாயனார் “Teacher.” The 63 canonized Tamil saints of South India, as documented in the *Periyapurāṇam* by Sekkilar (ca 1140). Several contributed to the Śaiva Siddhānta scriptural compendium called *Tirumurai*.

**neo-Indian religion:** Navabhārata Dharma. A modern form of liberal Hinduism that carries forward basic Hindu cultural values—such as dress, diet and the arts—while allowing religious values to subside.

**neti neti:** नेति नेति “Not this, not that.” An Upanishadic formula connoting, through negation, the undefinable and inconceivable nature of the Absolute.

**neutron star:** A star of such strong gravitational force that the atomic structure collapses, leaving only the nucleus; hence the name. A neutron star the size of an orange would weigh more



than the entire Earth.

**New Age:** According to *Webster's New World Dictionary*: "Of or pertaining to a cultural movement popular in the 1980s [and 90s] characterized by a concern with spiritual consciousness, and variously combining belief in reincarnation and astrology with such practices as meditation, vegetarianism and holistic medicine."

**Nirguṇa Brahman:** निर्गुणब्रह्मन् "God without qualities." See: *Brahman*.

**nirvikalpa samādhi:** निर्विकल्पसमाधि "Undifferentiated trance, ecstasy (*samādhi*) without form or seed." The realization of the Self, Paraśiva, a state of oneness beyond all change or diversity; beyond time, form and space. See: *samādhi*.

**nīśchitārtha:** निश्चितार्थ "Engagement (to marry);" "declaration of intention." Synonymous with *vāgdāna*.

**niyama:** नियम "Restraint." See: *yama-niyama*.

**nondual (nondualism):** See: *dvaita-advaita, monistic theism, Vedānta*.

**Nyāya:** न्याय "System; rule; logic." See: *śaḍ darśana*.

**Oblation:** An offering or sacrifice ceremoniously given to a God or *guru*. See: *sacrifice, yajña*.

**obscuration:** The power to make obscure, to conceal or veil, as in Śiva's veiling or obscuring grace.

**obscuring grace:** See: *tirodhana śakti*.

**olai:** ஒலை "Leaf." An ancient form of Indian books used in India, made of strips of fronds from the palmyra (*trīṇḍrūma*) and talipot (*tālapatra*, "fan-leaf") palms. Prepared birch bark (*bhūrja patra*) was the medium in the North.

**Om:** ओम् "Yes, verily." The most sacred *mantra* of Hinduism. An alternate transliteration of *Aum* (the sounds A and U blend to become O). See: *Aum*.

**P** *pada*: पद “A step, pace, stride; footstep, trace.”

*pāda*: पाद “The foot (of men and animals); quarter-part, section; stage; path.” Names the major sections of the Āgamic texts and the corresponding stages of practice and unfoldment on the path to *moksha*. According to Śaiva Siddhānta, there are four *pādas*, which are successive and cumulative; i.e. in accomplishing each one the soul prepares itself for the next. —*charyā pāda*: “Good conduct stage.” Learning to live righteously, serve selflessly, performing *karma yoga*. —*kriyā pāda*: “Religious action; worship stage.” Stage of *bhakti yoga*, of cultivating devotion through performing *pūjā* and regular daily *sādhana*. —*yoga pāda*: Having matured in the *charyā* and *kriyā pādas*, the soul now turns to internalized worship and *rāja yoga* under the guidance of a *satguru*. —*jñāna pāda*: “Stage of wisdom.” Once the soul has attained Realization, it is henceforth a wise one who lives out the life of the body, shedding blessings on mankind.

*pādapūjā*: पादपूजा “Foot worship.” Ceremonial worship of the *guru*’s sandals or holy feet, often through ablution with precious substances and offering of fruit and flowers. After the ceremony, the water of the bath, the fruit and other precious substances are partaken of as *prasāda* by devotees.

*paddhati*: पद्धति “Foot-path; track; guideline.” A class of expository writings, e.g., Gorakshanatha’s *Siddha Siddhānta Paddhati* and the many *paddhatis* that are guidebooks for temple rituals.

*padma*: पद्म The lotus flower, *Nelumbo nucifera*. Because it grows out of mud and rises to perfect purity and glory, it is an apt representation of the soul’s mystical growth and maturity.

*pādukā*: पादुका “Sandals.” Śrī *Pādukā* refers to the sandals of the preceptor, the traditional icon of the *guru*, representing his venerable feet and worshiped as the source of grace. See: *pādapūjā*.

*pañchabhūta*: पञ्चभूत “Five elements.” Earth, water, fire, air and ether. Also called *mahābhūta*.

*Pañcha Gaṇapati Utsava*: पञ्चगणपतिउत्सव “Fivefold Gaṇapati festival.” A modern five-day festival observed from the 21st through

25th of December. *Pañcha* (five) denotes Gaṇeśa's five faces, each representing a specific power (*śakti*). One face is worshiped each day, creating 1) harmony in the home, 2) concord among relatives, neighbors and friends, 3) good business and public relations, 4) cultural upliftment and 5) heartfelt charity and religiousness.

**Pañchākshara Mantra:** पञ्चाक्षरमन्त्र “Five-lettered chant.” Śaivism's most sacred *mantra*.

**Pañchamukha Gaṇapati:** पञ्चमुखगणपति “Five-faced Gaṇapati.”

***pañcha nitya karma(s)*:** पञ्चनित्यकर्म “Five constant duties:” 1) *dharma*, virtuous living, 2) *upāsana*, worship, 3) *utsava*, holy days, 4) *tīrthayātrā*, pilgrimage and 5) *saṁskāras*, sacraments.

**Pañcharātra:** पञ्चरात्र An ancient form of Vaiṣṇavism. Literally “five nights,” perhaps a corruption of *pañcharatha* (“five vehicles, ways or paths”), indicating five ancient sects in the vicinity of Mathura that eventually merged into one with the worship of Kṛiṣṇa.

***pañcha śraddhā*:** पञ्चश्रद्धा “Five faiths.” A summary of Hindu belief correlated to the *pañcha nitya karmas*: 1) *sarva* Brahman: God is All in all, soul is divine; 2) *maṇḍira*: belief in temples and divine beings; 3) *karma*: cosmic justice; 4) *saṁsāra-moksha*: rebirth brings enlightenment and liberation; 5) *Vedas* and *satguru*: the necessity of scripture and preceptor.

***Pañchatantra*:** पञ्चतन्त्र The collection of animal fables used by sage Vishnu Sharma to teach the king's sons the “art of practical life.”

***pandit (paṇḍita)*:** पण्डित (Also, *pundit*.) A Hindu religious scholar or theologian, well versed in philosophy, liturgy, religious law and sacred science.

**panentheism:** “All-in-God doctrine.” The view that the universe is part of the being of God, as distinguished from *pantheism* (“all-is-God doctrine”), which identifies God with the total reality. In contrast, panentheism holds that God pervades the world, but is also beyond it. For the panentheist, God is in all, and all is in God. Panentheism is the technical term for monistic theism.

**pantheism:** “All-is-God doctrine.” Philosophical position in which God and the world are identical. To the pantheist, God is not a Personal Lord, nor a transcendent or formless Being, but is the totality of all existence, including universal laws, movement, matter, etc. See: *panentheism*.

**pāpa:** पाप “Wickedness; sin, crime.” 1) Bad or evil. 2) Wrongful action. 3) Demerit earned through wrongdoing. Each act of *pāpa* carries its *karmic* consequence, *karmaphala*, “fruit of action,” for which scriptures delineate specific penance for expiation. *Pāpa* can produce disease, depression, loneliness and such, but can be dissolved through penance (*prāyaścitta*), austerity (*tapas*) and good deeds (*sukṛityā*).

**para:** पर “Supreme; beyond.” A prefix.

**paramaguru:** परमगुरु “Grand preceptor.” The *guru* of a disciple’s *guru*.

**paramahansa:** परमहंस “Supreme swan.” A class of liberated renunciates. From *hansa*, meaning swan (more precisely the Indian goose, *Anser Indicus*).

**Paramātmān:** परमात्मन् “Supreme Self,” or “transcendent soul.” Paraśiva, Absolute Reality, the one transcendent Self of every soul. Contrasted with *ātman*, which includes all three aspects of the soul: Paraśiva, Parāśakti and *ānandamaya kośa*.

**Parameśvara:** परमेश्वर “Supreme Lord or Ruler.” God Śiva’s third perfection, Supreme Mahādeva, Śiva-Śakti, mother of the universe, the Primal Soul. In this perfection, as personal, father-mother God, Śiva is a person—who has a body, with head, arms and legs, etc.—who acts, wills, blesses, gives *darśana*, guides, creates, preserves, reabsorbs, obscures and enlightens.

**paramparā:** परंपरा “Uninterrupted succession.” A lineage.

**parārtha pūjā:** परार्थपूजा “Public liturgy and worship.” See: *pūjā*.

**Parāśakti:** पराशक्ति “Supreme power; primal energy.” God Śiva’s second perfection, which is impersonal, immanent, and with form—the all-pervasive, Pure Consciousness and Primal Substance of all that exists, Satchidānanda, experienced by the diligent

meditator as the underlying oneness flowing through all form. The experience is called *śavikalpa samādhi*.

**Paraśiva:** परशिव “Transcendent Śiva.” The Self God, Śiva’s first perfection, Absolute Reality. Paraśiva is *That* which is beyond the grasp of consciousness, transcends time, form and space and defies description. To merge with the Absolute in mystic union is the ultimate goal of all incarnated souls, the reason for their living on this planet, and the deepest meaning of their experiences. Attainment of this is called Self Realization or *nirvikalpa samādhi*.

**Pārvati:** पार्वती “Mountain’s daughter,” the Universal Mother. Prayers are offered to Her for strength, health and eradication of impurities. Mythologically, Pārvati is wedded to Śiva.

**pāśa:** पाश “Tether; noose.” The whole of existence, manifest and unmanifest. That which binds or limits the soul and keeps it (for a time) from manifesting its full potential. *Pāśa* consists of the soul’s threefold bondage of *āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā*. See: *mala*, *Pati-pāśu-pāśa*.

**paśu:** पशु “Cow, cattle, kine; fettered individual.” Refers to animals or beasts, including man. In philosophy, the soul. Śiva as lord of creatures is called Paśupati. See: *pāśa*, *Pati-pāśu-pāśa*.

**Pāśupata Śaivism:** पाशुपतशैव See: *Śaivism*, *six schools*.

**Patanjali (Patañjali):** पतञ्जलि A Śaivite Nātha *siddha* (ca 200 BCE) who codified the ancient *yoga* philosophy which outlines the path to enlightenment through purification, control and transcendence of the mind.

**Pati:** पति “Master; lord; owner.” A name for God Śiva indicating His commanding relationship with souls as caring ruler and helpful guide. See: *Pati-pāśu-pāśa*.

**Pati-pāśu-pāśa:** पति पशु पाश Literally: “master, cow and tether.” These are the three primary elements of Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy: God, soul and world—Divinity, man and cosmos—seen as a mystically and intricately interrelated unity. Pati is God, envisioned as a cowherd. *Paśu* is the soul, envisioned as a cow. *Pāśa*

is the all-important force or fetter by which God brings souls along the path to Truth.

**penance:** *Prāyaścitta*. Atonement, expiation. An act of devotion (*bhakti*), austerity (*tapas*) or discipline (*sukṛitya*) undertaken to soften or nullify the anticipated reaction to a past action.

**perfections:** Qualities, aspects, nature or dimensions that are perfect. God Śiva's three perfections are Paraśiva, Parāśakti and Parameśvara. See: *Parameśvara*, *Parāśakti*, *Paraśiva*.

**Periyapurāṇam:** பெரிய புராணம் Twelfth book of the *Tirumurai*. Lives of the 63 Śaiva Nayanar saints of Tamil Nadu, written by Sekkilar (ca 1140).

**personal dharma:** *Svadharmā*. An individual's unique path in life. See: *dharma*.

**Personal God:** See: *Parameśvara*.

**pilgrimage:** *Tīrthayātrā*. Journeying to a holy temple, near or far, performed by all Hindus at least once each year. See: *tīrthayātrā*.

**piṅgalā:** पिङ्गला "Tawny channel." The masculine psychic current flowing along the spine. See: *kuṇḍalinī*, *nāḍī*.

**pīṭha:** पीठ "Seat; pedestal; foundation." 1) The base or pedestal of the Śivaliṅga, or of any Deity idol. 2) A religious seat, such as the throne of the abbot of a monastery. 3) An *aadheenam*, *āśrama* or *maṭha* established around such a seat of spiritual authority.

**pitta:** पित्त "Bile; fire." One of the three bodily humors, called *doshas*, *pitta* is known as the fire humor. It is the *āyurvedic* principle of bodily heat-energy. *Pitta dosha* governs nutritional absorption, body temperature and intelligence. See: *āyurveda*, *dosha*.

**Pleiades:** A cluster of stars in the Taurus constellation, six of which are now visible from Earth. This group of stars is known in Sanskrit as *Kṛittikā*, an important *nakshatra* for Lord Kārttikeya and believed to be this Deity's place of origin before He came to the star system of Earth.

**Plotinus:** Egypt-born Greek philosopher (205–270), one of the Western world's greatest known mystics, who extended and

revived the work of the Greek philosopher Plato in the Roman Empire.

**pluralism (pluralistic):** Doctrine having three or more distinct and irreducible components, such as God, souls and world. See: *dvaita-advaita*.

**pluralistic realism:** A term for pluralism used by various schools including Meykandar Śaiva Siddhānta, emphasizing that the components of existence are absolutely real in themselves and not creations of consciousness or God.

**pradakṣiṇa:** प्रदक्षिण “Moving to the right.” Worshipful circumambulation, walking clockwise around the temple sanctum or other holy place, with the intention of shifting the mind from worldly concerns to awareness of the Divine.

**pradosha:** प्रदोष “Evening.” The auspicious 3-hour period, 1½ hours before and after sunset. *Pradosha* especially refers to this period on the 13th (*trayodaśī*) *tithi* of each fortnight, an optimum time of the month for meditation. Its observance, prepared for by fasting, is called *pradosha vrata*. See: *fast*, *tithi*.

**prakṛiti:** प्रकृति “Primary matter; nature.” In the 25-*tattva* Sāṅkhya system—which concerns itself only with the tangible spectrum of creation—*prakṛiti*, or *pradhāna*, is one of two supreme beginningless realities: matter and spirit, *Prakṛiti* and *Puruṣa*, the female and male principles. In Śāktism, *Prakṛiti*, the active principle, is personified as *Devī*, the Goddess, and is synonymous with *Māyā*. In Śaivite cosmology, *prakṛiti* is the 24th of 36 *tattvas*, the potentiality of the physical cosmos, the gross energy from which all lower *tattvas* are formed. Its three qualities are *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.

**pralaya:** प्रलय “Dissolution, reabsorption; destruction; death.” A synonym for *samhāra*, one of the five functions of Śiva. Also names the partial destruction or reabsorption of the cosmos at the end of each eon or *kalpa*.

**prāṇa:** प्राण Vital energy or life principle. Literally, “vital air,” from the root *praṇ*, “to breathe.” *Prāṇa* in the human body moves in the

*prāṇamaya kośa* as five primary life currents known as *vāyus*, “vital airs or winds.” *Prāṇa* sometimes denotes the power or animating force of the cosmos, the sum total of all energy and forces.

***prāṇamaya kośa*:** प्राणमयकोश “Life-energy sheath.” See: *kośa*, *prāṇa*.

***praṇāma*:** प्रणाम “Obeisance; bowing down.” Reverent salutation in which the head or body is bowed. —***ashṭāṅga praṇāma*:** “Eight-limbed obeisance.” The full prostration for men, in which the hands, chest, forehead, knees and feet touch the ground. (Same as *śashtāṅga praṇāma*.) —***pañchāṅga praṇāma*:** “Five-limbed obeisance.” The woman’s form of prostration, in which the hands, head and legs touch the ground (with the ankles crossed, right over the left).

***Praṇava*:** प्रणव “Humming.” The mantra *Aum*, denoting God as the Primal Sound.

***prāṇāyāma*:** प्राणायाम “Breath control.” Science of controlling *prāṇa* through breathing techniques in which the lengths of inhalation, retention and exhalation are modulated. *Prāṇāyāma* prepares the mind for meditation. See: *rāja yoga*.

***prāṇic body*:** The subtle, life-giving sheath called *prāṇamaya kośa*. See: *kośa*.

***prapatti*:** प्रपत्ति “Throwing oneself down.” *Bhakti*, total, unconditional submission to God, often coupled with an attitude of helplessness and self-effacement.

***prārabdha karma*:** प्रारब्धकर्म “Action that has been unleashed or aroused.” See: *karma*.

***prasāda*:** प्रसाद “Clarity, brightness; grace.” 1) The virtue of serenity and graciousness. 2) Food offered to the Deity or the *guru*, or the blessed remnants of such food. 3) Any propitiatory offering.

***praśnottaram*:** प्रश्नोत्तरम् “Question-answer (*praśna-uttaram*).” A term used in *Dancing with Śiva* for *catechism*.

***pratyāhāra*:** प्रत्याहार “Withdrawal.” The drawing in of forces. In *yoga*, the withdrawal from external consciousness. (Also a synonym for *pralaya*.) See: *rāja yoga*.



**prāyaśchitta:** प्रायश्चित्त “Predominant thought or aim.” Penance. Acts of atonement. See: *penance*.

**prāyopaveśa:** प्रायोपवेश “Resolving to die through fasting.” Self-willed death by fasting.

**Primal Soul:** The uncreated, original, perfect soul—Śiva Parameśvara—who emanates from Himself the inner and outer universes and an infinite plurality of individual souls whose essence is identical with His essence. God in His personal aspect as Lord and Creator, depicted in many forms: Naṭarāja by Śaivites, Viṣṇu by Vaiṣṇavites, Devī by Śāktas.

**Primal Sound:** In Hinduism, sound is the first manifestation, even before light, in the creative scheme of things. The Primal Sound is also known as *Pranava*, the sound of the *mula mantra*, “Aum.”

**protocol:** Customs of proper etiquette and ceremony, especially in relation to religious or political dignitaries.

**pūjā:** पूजा “Worship, adoration.” An Āgamic rite of worship performed in the home, temple or shrine, to the *mūrti*, *śrī pādūkā*, or other consecrated object, or to a person, such as the *satguru*. Its inner purpose is to purify the atmosphere around the object worshiped, establish a connection with the inner worlds and invoke the presence of God, Gods or one’s *guru*. *Ātmārtha pūjā* is done for oneself and immediate family, usually at home in a private shrine. *Parārtha pūjā* is public *pūjā*, performed by authorized or ordained priests in a public shrine or temple.

**pujārī:** पुजारी “Worshiper.” A general term for Hindu temple priests, as well as anyone performing *pūjā*.

**pundit (paṇḍita):** पण्डित See: *pandit*.

**punarjanma:** पुनर्जन्म “Reincarnation.” From *punaḥ*, “again and again,” and *janma*, “taking birth.” See: *reincarnation*.

**punsavana:** पुंसवन “Male rite; bringing forth a male.” Traditional sacrament performed during early pregnancy in prayer of a son. See: *samskāra*.

**punya:** पुण्य “Holy; virtuous; auspicious.” 1) Good or righteous. 2) Meritorious action. 3) Merit earned through right thought,

word and action. *Puṇya* includes all forms of doing good, from the simplest helpful deed to a lifetime of conscientious beneficence. *Puṇya* produces inner contentment, deep joy, the feeling of security and fearlessness. See: *pāpa*.

**Purāṇa:** पुराण “Ancient lore.” Hindu folk narratives containing ethical and cosmological teachings relative to Gods, man and the world. They revolve around five subjects: primary creation, secondary creation, genealogy, cycles of time and history. There are 18 major *Purāṇas* which are designated as either Śaivite, Vaiṣṇavite or Śākta.

**Pure Consciousness:** See: *Parāśakti*, *Satchidānanda*.

**purgatory:** A state or place of temporary punishment or expiation. A hellish condition that is not eternal. *Purgatory* is actually more fitting than the term *hell* as an equivalent for the Sanskrit *Naraka*.

**purohita:** पुरोहित “Front-most; leader; family priest.” A Smārta *brāhmin* priest who specializes in home ceremonies.

**purusha:** पुरुष “The spirit that dwells in the body/in the universe.” Person; spirit; man. Metaphysically, the soul, neither male nor female. Also used in Yoga and Sāṅkhya for the transcendent Self. A synonym for *ātman*. *Purusha* can also refer to the Supreme Being or Soul, as it sometimes does in the *Upanishads*. In Śaiva cosmology, *purusha* is the 25th of 36 *tattvas*, one level subtler than *prakṛiti*. See: *prakṛiti*.

**purusha dharma:** पुरुषधर्म “A man’s code of duty and conduct.” See: *dharma*.

**purushārtha:** पुरुषार्थ “Human wealth or purpose.” The four pursuits in which people may legitimately engage, also called *chaturvarga*, “fourfold good”—a basic principle of Hindu ethics. —**dharma:** “Righteous living.” —**artha:** “Wealth.” —**kāma:** “Pleasure, love; enjoyment.” —**moksha:** “Liberation.” Freedom from rebirth.

**Q** **qualified nondualism:** Nearly monistic; a translation of *Viśiṣṭādvaita*.

**quantum:** Quantity or amount. In the quantum theory of modern science: a fixed basic unit, usually of energy. —**quantum particles of light:** Light understood not as a continuum, but as traveling bundles each of a same intensity. Deeper still, these particles originate and resolve themselves in a one divine energy. —**at the quantum level** (of the mind): Deep within the mind, at the most subtle energy level.

**R** **Radhakrishnan (Rādhākṛishṇan), Dr. S.:** राधाकृष्णन् (1888-1975) President of India from 1962 to 1967, Hindu scholar, philosopher, writer.

**Rāhu:** राहु “The seizer.” In Hindu astrology, Rāhu is one of the nine important planets (*graha*), but is an invisible or “astral” one, along with its counterpart, Ketu. Both are believed to cause general consternation among people. See: *vyotisha*.

**rājanya:** राजन्य “Rulership.” A synonym for *kshatriya*. See: *varṇa dharma*.

**rajas:** रजस् “Passion; activity.” See: *guṇa*.

**rāja yoga:** राजयोग “King of *yogas*.” Also known as *aṣṭāṅga yoga*, “eight-limbed *yoga*,” the system of eight progressive stages to Illumination: 1) —**yama:** “Restraint.” Virtuous and moral living 2) —**niyama:** “Observance.” Religious practices which cultivate the qualities of the higher nature. 3) —**āsana:** “Seat or posture.” 4) —**prāṇāyāma:** “Mastering life force.” Breath control. 5) —**pratyāhāra:** “Withdrawal.” Withdrawing consciousness from the physical senses. 6) —**dhāraṇā:** “Concentration.” Guiding the flow of consciousness. 7) —**dhyāna:** “Meditation.” 8) —**samādhi:** “Enstasy,” “sameness, contemplation/realization.”

**Rāma:** राम Venerated hero of the *Rāmāyaṇa* epic, and one of the two most popular incarnations of Viṣṇu, along with Kṛishṇa. His worship is almost universal among Vaiṣṇavas, and extensive among Smārtas and other liberal Hindus.

**Ramakrishna (Rāmakṛishṇa):** रामकृष्ण (1836–1886) One of the great saints and mystics of modern Hinduism, and an exemplar of monistic theism—fervent devotee of Mother Kālī and staunch monist who taught oneness and the pursuit of *nirvikalpa samā-dhi*, realization of the Absolute. He was *guru* to the great Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902), who internationalized Hindu thought and philosophy.

**Ramanuja (Rāmānuja):** रामानुज Philosopher saint, great *bhakta* (1017–1137), founder of one of five major Vaishṇava schools, and considered the greatest critic of Sankara's *advaita*.

**Rāmāyaṇa:** रामायण “Life of Rāma.” One of India's two grand epics (*Itihāsa*) along with the *Mahābhārata*. Valmiki's tragic love story of Rāma and Sītā, whose exemplary lives have helped set high standards of dignity and nobility as an integral part of Hindu *dharma*.

**Ramprasad (Rāmprasād):** रामप्रसाद Bengali saint-poet (1718–1775) who composed hymns to Śakti.

**reincarnation:** “Re-entering the flesh.” *Punarjanma*; metempsychosis. The process wherein souls take on a physical body through the birth process. See: *evolution of the soul*, *moksha*, *saṁsāra*, *soul*.

**relative reality:** *Māyā*. That which is ever changing and changeable, manifest existence, which is not an illusion but is also not Absolute Reality, which is eternal and unchanging. See: *Absolute Reality*, *māyā*.

**restraints:** See: *yama-niyama*.

**revealing grace:** See: *anugraha śakti*, *grace*.

**Rig Veda:** ऋग्वेद “*Veda* of verse (*ṛik*).” The first and oldest of the four *Veda* corpora of revealed scriptures (*śruti*), including a hymn collection (*Saṁhitā*), priestly explanatory manuals (*Brāhmaṇas*), forest treatises (*Āraṇyakas*) elaborating on the Vedic rites, and philosophical dialogs (*Upanishads*).

**ṛishi:** ऋषि “Seer.” A term for an enlightened being, emphasizing psychic perception and visionary wisdom.

**Rishi from the Himalayas:** First-known modern-day *siddha* of the

Nandinātha Sampradāya. See: *Kailāsa Paramparā Nandinātha Sampradāya*.

**ṛita:** ऋत “Sacred order, cosmic law; truth.” See: *dharma*.

**rites of passage:** Sacraments marking crucial stages of life. See: *saṁskāra*.

**ṛitu kāla:** ऋतुकाल “Fit or proper season.” Time of menses. A traditional ceremony marking a young woman’s coming of age. See: *saṁskāra*.

**Rudra:** रुद्र “Controller of terrific powers;” or “red, shining one.” Śiva as the God of dissolution, the universal force of reabsorption. *Rudra-Śiva* is revered both as the “terrifying one” and the “lord of tears,” for He wields and controls the terrific powers which may cause lamentation among humans. See: *Naṭarāja*.

**rudrāksha:** रुद्राक्ष “Eye of Rudra; or red-eyed.” Refers to the third eye, or *ājñā chakra*. Marble-sized, multi-faced, reddish-brown seeds from the *Eleocarpus ganitrus*, or blue marble tree, which are sacred to Śiva and a symbol of His compassion for humanity.

**Ś śabda kośa:** शब्दकोश “Sheath of sounds, or words.” Vocabulary; a dictionary or glossary of terms.

**sacrament:** 1) Holy rite, especially one solemnized in a formal, consecrated manner which is a bonding between the recipient and God, Gods or *guru*. This includes rites of passage (*saṁskāra*), ceremonies sanctifying crucial events or stages of life. 2) *Prasāda*. Sacred substances, grace-filled gifts, blessed in sacred ceremony or by a holy person. See: *saṁskāra*.

**sacred thread:** *Yajñopavīta*. See: *upanayana*.

**sadāchāra:** सदाचार “Proper conduct; virtue, morality.” It is embodied in the principles of *dharma*.

**Sadāśiva:** सदाशिव “Ever-auspicious.” A name of the Primal Soul, Śiva, a synonym for *Parameśvara*, which is expressed in the physical being of the *satguru*. *Sadāśiva* especially denotes the power of revealing grace, *anugraha śakti*, the third *tattva*, after which emerge Śiva’s other four divine powers.

**sādhaka:** साधक “Accomplished one; a devotee who performs *sādhana*.” A serious aspirant who has undertaken spiritual disciplines, is usually celibate and under the guidance of a *guru*. He wears white and may be under vows, but is not a *sannyāsin*.

**sādhana:** साधन “Effective means of attainment.” Religious or spiritual disciplines, such as *pūjā*, *yoga*, meditation, *japa*, fasting and austerity.

**sādhana mārṅa:** साधनमार्ग “The way of *sādhana*.” A term used by Sage Yogaswami to name his prescription for seekers of Truth—a path of intense effort, spiritual discipline and consistent inner transformation, as opposed to intellectual learning.

**sādhū:** साधु “Virtuous one; straight, unerring.” A holy man dedicated to the search for God. A *sādhū* may or may not be a *yogī* or a *sannyāsin*, or be connected in any way with a *guru* or legitimate lineage. *Sādhūs* usually have no fixed abode and travel unattached from place to place, often living on alms.

**sādhvī:** साध्वी Feminine of *sādhū*. See: *sādhū*.

**Saḡuṇa Brahman:** सगुणब्रह्मन् “God with qualities.” The Personal Lord. See: *Brahman*.

**sahasra lekhana sādhanā:** सहस्रलेखनसाधन “Thousand-times writing discipline.” The spiritual practice of writing a sacred *mantra* 1,008 times.

**sahasrārā chakra:** सहस्रारचक्र “Thousand-spoked wheel.” The cranial psychic force center. See: *chakra*.

**Śaiva:** शैव Of or relating to Śaivism or its adherents, of whom there are about 400 million in the world today. Same as *Śaivite*. See: *Śaivism*.

**Śaiva Āgamas:** शैव आगम The sectarian revealed scriptures of the Śaivas. Strongly theistic, they identify Śiva as the Supreme Lord, immanent and transcendent. They are in two main divisions: the 64 *Kashmīr Śaiva Āgamas* and the 28 *Śaiva Siddhānta Āgamas*. The latter group are the fundamental sectarian scriptures of Śaiva Siddhānta.

**Śaiva Siddhānta:** शैवसिद्धान्त “Final conclusions of Śaivism.”

The most widespread and influential Śaivite school today, predominant especially among the Tamil people of Sri Lanka and South India. It is the formalized theology of the divine revelations contained in the twenty-eight *Śaiva Āgamas*. For Śaiva Siddhāntins, Śiva is the totality of all, understood in three perfections: Parameśvara (the Personal Creator Lord), Parāśakti (the substratum of form) and Paraśiva (Absolute Reality which transcends all). Souls and world are identical in essence with Śiva, yet also differ in that they are evolving. A pluralistic stream arose in the middle ages from the teachings of Aghorasiva and Meykandar. See: *Śaivism*.

**Śaiva Viśiṣṭādvaita:** शैवविशिष्टाद्वैत Philosophy of Śiva Advaita.

**Śaivism (Śaiva):** शैव The religion followed by those who worship Śiva as supreme God. Oldest of the four sects of Hinduism. The earliest historical evidence of Śaivism is from the 8,000-year-old Indus Valley civilization in the form of the famous seal of Śiva as Lord Paśupati, seated in a *yogic* pose. There are many schools of Śaivism, six of which are Śaiva Siddhānta, Pāśupata Śaivism, Kāshmīr Śaivism, Vīra Śaivism, Siddha Siddhānta and Śiva Advaita. They are based firmly on the *Vedas* and *Śaiva Āgamas*, and thus have much in common, including the following principle doctrines: 1) the five powers of Śiva—creation, preservation, destruction, revealing and concealing grace; 2) The three categories: Pati, *paśu* and *pāśa* (“God, souls and bonds”); 3) the three bonds: *ānava*, *karma* and *māyā*; 4) the threefold power of Śiva: *icchā śakti*, *kriyā śakti* and *jñāna śakti*; 5) the thirty-six *tattvas*, or categories of existence; 6) the need for initiation from a *satguru*; 7) the power of *mantra*; 8) the four *pādas* (stages): *charyā* (selfless service), *kriyā* (devotion), *yoga* (meditation), and *jñāna* (illumination); 9) the belief in the Pañchākshara as the foremost *mantra*, and in *rudrāksha* and *vibhūti* as sacred aids to faith; 10) the beliefs in *satguru* (preceptor), Śivaliṅga (object of worship) and *saṅgama* (company of holy persons). See: *individual school entries*, *Śaivism (six schools)*.

**Śaivism (six schools):** Through history Śaivism has developed a vast array of lineages. Philosophically, six schools are most notable: Śaiva Siddhānta, Pāśupata Śaivism, Kashmir Śaivism, Vīra Śaivism, Siddha Siddhānta and Śiva Advaita. Śaiva Siddhānta first distinguished itself in the second century BCE through the masterful treatise of a Himalayan pilgrim to South India, Rishi Tirumular. It is Śaivism's most widespread and influential school. Pāśupata Śaivism emerged in the Himalayan hills over 25 centuries ago. Ancient writings chronicle it as a Śiva ascetic *yoga* path whose most renowned *guru* was Lakulisa. Kashmir Śaivism, a strongly monistic lineage, arose from the revelatory aphorisms of Sri Vasugupta in the tenth century. Vīra Śaivism took shape in India's Karnataka state in the 12th-century under the inspiration of Sri Basavanna. It is a dynamic, reformist sect, rejecting religious complexity and stressing each devotee's personal relationship with God. Siddha Siddhānta, also known as Gorakshanātha Śaivism, takes its name from the writings of the powerful 10th-century *yogī*, Sri Gorakshanatha, whose techniques for Śiva identity attracted a large monastic and householder following in North India and Nepal. Śiva Advaita is a Śaivite interpretation of the Vedānta Sūtras, based on the writings of Srikantha, a 12th-century scholar who sought to reconcile the *Upanishads* with the *Āgamas*.

**Śaivite (Śaiva):** शैव Of or relating to Śaivism or its adherents, of whom there are about 400 million in the world today. See: *Hinduism, Śaivism*.

**śākāhāra:** शाकाहार "Vegetarian diet." From *śāka*, "vegetable;" and *āhāra*, "eating; taking food." See: *yama-niyama*.

**Śakta:** शक्त Of or relating to *Śāktism*. See: *Śāktism*.

**Śakti:** शक्ति "Power, energy." The active power or manifest energy of Śiva that pervades all of existence. Its most refined aspect is Parāśakti, or Satchidānanda, the pure consciousness and primal substratum of all form. This pristine, divine energy unfolds as *icṣhā śakti* (the power of desire, will, love), *kriyā śakti* (the power



of action) and *jñāna śakti* (the power of wisdom, knowing), represented as the three prongs of Śiva's *triśūla*, or trident. From these arise the five powers of revealment, concealment, dissolution, preservation and creation. In Śaiva Siddhānta, Śiva is All, and His divine energy, Śakti, is inseparable from Him. This unity is symbolized in the image of Ardhanārīśvara, "half-female God." In popular, village Hinduism, the unity of Śiva and Śakti is replaced with the concept of Śiva and Śakti as separate entities. Śakti is represented as female, and Śiva as male. In Hindu temples, art and mythology, they are everywhere seen as the divine couple. Within the Śākta religion, the worship of the Goddess is paramount, in Her many fierce and benign forms. Śakti is most easily experienced by devotees as the sublime, bliss-inspiring energy that emanates from a holy person or sanctified Hindu temple.

**śaktipāta:** शक्तिपात "Descent of grace." *Guru dīkshā*, initiation from the preceptor; particularly the first initiation, which awakens the *kuṇḍalinī* and launches the process of spiritual unfoldment.

**Śāktism (Śākta):** शाक्त "Doctrine of power." The religion followed by those who worship the Supreme as the Divine Mother—Śakti or Devī—in Her many forms, both gentle and fierce. Śāktism is one of the four primary sects of Hinduism. Śāktism's first historical signs are thousands of female statuettes dated ca 5500 BCE recovered at the Mehrgarh village in India. In philosophy and practice, Śāktism greatly resembles Śaivism, both faiths promulgating, for example, the same ultimate goals of *advaitic* union with Śiva and *moksha*. But Śāktas worship Śakti as the Supreme Being exclusively, as the dynamic aspect of Divinity, while Śiva is considered solely transcendent and is not worshiped. See: *Śakti*.

**Śakti Viśiṣṭādvaita:** शक्तिविशिष्टाद्वैत The philosophy of Vīra Śaivism. See: *Vīra Śaivism*.

**samādhi:** समाधि "Enstasy," "standing within one's Self." "Sameness; contemplation; union, wholeness; completion, accomplishment." *Samādhi* is the state of true *yoga*, in which the meditator and the

object of meditation are one. *Samādhi* is of two levels. The first is *savikalpa samādhi* (“ecstasy with form” or “seed”), identification or oneness with the essence of an object. Its highest form is the realization of the primal substratum or pure consciousness, Sat-chidānanda. The second is *nirvikalpa samādhi* (“ecstasy without form” or “seed”), identification with the Self, in which all modes of consciousness are transcended and Absolute Reality, Paraśiva, beyond time, form and space, is experienced.

**samāvartana:** समावर्तन “Returning home.” The ceremony marking a youth’s completion of Vedic studies. See: *saṁskāra*.

**Sāma Veda:** सामवेद “Song of wisdom.” Third of the four *Vedas*. Ninety percent of its 1,875 stanzas are derived from the *Rig Veda*. It is a collection of hymns specially arranged and notated for chanting with a distinctive melody and cadence by the Udgātā priests during *yajña*, fire ceremony, together with stanzas from the *Yajur Veda*. This *Veda* represents the oldest known form of Indian music. See: *Śruti, Vedas*.

**sampradāya:** संप्रदाय “Tradition,” “transmission,” a philosophical or religious doctrine or lineage. A living stream of tradition or theology within Hinduism, passed on by oral training and initiation. Each *sampradāya* is often represented by many *paramparās*.

**saṁsāra:** संसार “Flow.” The phenomenal world. The cycle of birth, death and rebirth; the total pattern of successive earthly lives experienced by a soul.

**saṁsārī:** संसारी “One in *saṁsāra*,” “wanderer.” A soul during transmigration, immersed in or attached to mundane existence, hence not striving for liberation (*moksha*).

**saṁskāra:** संस्कार “Impression, activator; sanctification, preparation.” 1) The imprints left on the subconscious mind by experience (from this or previous lives), which then color all of life, one’s nature, responses, states of mind, etc. 2) A sacrament or rite done to mark a significant transition of life.

**Sanātana Dharma:** सनातनधर्म “Eternal religion” or “Everlasting path.” It is a traditional designation for the Hindu religion. See:

*Hinduism.*

**Sanatkumāra:** सनत्कुमार “Ever-youthful;” perpetual virgin boy. A name of God Murugan. Also one of the eight disciples of Maharishi Nandinatha.

**sañchita karma:** सञ्चितकर्म “Accumulated action.” The accumulated consequence of an individual’s actions in this and past lives. See: *karma*.

**sanctum sanctorum:** “Holy of holies.” *Garbhagriha*. The most sacred part of a temple, usually a cave-like stone chamber, in which the main icon is installed.

**sandhyā upāsana:** सन्ध्या उपासना “Worship at time’s junctures.” Drawing near to God at the changes of time—worship and *sādhana* performed in the home at dawn, noon and dusk.

**sañkalpa:** संकल्प “Will; purpose; determination.” A solemn vow or declaration of purpose to perform any ritual observance.

**Sankara (Śaṅkara):** शङ्कर “Conferring happiness;” “propitious.” A name of Śiva. Also one of Hinduism’s most extraordinary monks, Adi Sankara (788–820), preeminent *guru* of the Smārta Sampradāya.

**Sāṅkhya:** सांख्य “Enumeration, reckoning.” See: *śaḍ darśana*.

**San Mārga:** सन्मार्ग “True path.” The straight, spiritual path leading to the ultimate goal, Self Realization, without detouring into unnecessary psychic exploration or pointless development of *siddhis*. *San Mārga* also names the *jñāna pāda*.

**San Marga Sanctuary:** A meditation *tīrtha* at the foot of the extinct volcano, Mount Waialeale, on Hawaii’s Garden Island, Kauai. Founded in 1970, it is among the many public services of Saiva Siddhanta Church, one of America’s senior Hindu religious institutions. See: *Subramuniyaswami*.

**sannidhāna:** सन्निधान “Nearness; proximity; provost; taking charge of.” A title of heads of monasteries: Guru Mahāsannidhāna. See: *sānnidhya*.

**sānnidhya:** सान्निध्य “(Divine) presence; nearness, indwelling.” The radiance and blessed presence of *śakti* within and around a

temple or a holy person.

**sannyāsa:** संन्यास “Renunciation.” “Throwing down or abandoning.” *Sannyāsa* is the repudiation of the *dharma*, including the obligations and duties, of the householder and the acceptance of the even more demanding *dharma* of the renunciate.

**sannyāsa āśrama:** संन्यास आश्रम “Renunciate stage.” The period of life after age 72. See: *āśrama*.

**sannyāsa dharma:** संन्यासधर्म “Renunciate virtue.” The life, way and traditions of those who have irrevocably renounced prerogatives and obligations of the householder, including personal property, wealth, ambitions, social position and family ties, in favor of the full-time monastic quest for divine awakening, Self Realization and spiritual upliftment of humanity. See: *sannyāsa*, *sannyāsa dikshā*, *sannyāsin*, *videhamukti*.

**sannyāsa dikshā:** संन्यासदीक्षा “Renunciate initiation.” See: *sannyāsa dharma*, *videhamukti*.

**sannyāsin:** संन्यासिन् “Renouncer.” One who has taken *sannyāsa dikshā*. A Hindu monk, *swāmī*, and one of a world brotherhood (or holy order) of *sannyāsins*. Some are wanderers and others live in monasteries. See: *sannyāsa*, *sannyāsa dharma*, *sannyāsa dikshā*, *swāmī*.

**Sanskrit (Saṃskṛita):** संस्कृत “Well-made,” “refined,” “perfected.” The classical sacerdotal language of ancient India, considered a pure vehicle for communication with the celestial worlds. It is the primary language in which Hindu scriptures are written, including the *Vedas* and *Āgamas*. Employed today as a liturgical, literary and scholarly language, but no longer as a spoken vernacular.

**sant:** सन्त “Saint.” A Hindi or vernacular word derived from the Sanskrit *sat*, meaning “true; real; virtuous.”

**santosh:** सन्तोष “Contentment.” See: *yama-niyama*.

**śaraṇa:** शरण “Refuge.” See: *Śivaśaraṇā*, *Vīra Śaivism*.

**Sarasvatī:** सरस्वती “The flowing one.” Śakti, the Universal Mother; Goddess of the arts and learning, mythological consort of the

God Brahmā.

**Śaravaṇa:** शरवण “Thicket of reeds.” Mythologically, a sacred Himalayan pond where Lord Kārttikeya was nurtured; esoterically understood as the lake of divine essence, or primal consciousness. See: *Kārttikeya*.

**sārī:** (Hindi, साड़ी) The traditional garment of a Hindu woman.

**śāstra:** शास्त्र “Sacred text; teaching.” 1) Any religious or philosophical treatise, or body of writings. 2) A department of knowledge, a science; e.g., the *Dharma Śāstras* on religious law, *Artha Śāstras* on politics.

**śāstrī:** शास्त्री One who is knowledgeable in *śāstra*, or scriptures.

**Satan:** The devil; evil personified. A being who in Christian and other Semitic religions opposes God’s will and tempts souls into wickedness. In Hinduism, all is seen as the manifestation of God, and there is no Satan. See: *asura*, *hell*, *Naraka*.

**Satchidānanda (Sachchidānanda):** सच्चिदानन्द “Existence-consciousness-bliss.” A synonym for *Parāśakti*. Lord Śiva’s Divine Mind and simultaneously the pure superconscious mind of each individual soul. Satchidānanda is perfect love and omniscient, omnipotent consciousness, the fountainhead of all existence, yet containing and permeating all existence. See: *Parāśakti*.

**satguru (sadguru):** सद्गुरु “True weighty one.” A spiritual preceptor of the highest attainment and authority—one who has realized the ultimate Truth, Paraśiva, through *nirvikalpa samādhi*—a *jīvanmukta* able to lead others securely along the spiritual path. He is always a *sannyāsin*, an unmarried renunciate. He is recognized and revered as the embodiment of God, Sadāśiva, the source of grace and liberation. See: *guru-śishya relationship*, *pādapūjā*.

**sattva guṇa:** सत्त्वगुण “Perfection of Being.” The quality of goodness or purity. See: *guṇa*.

**satya:** सत्य “Truthfulness.” See: *yama-niyama*.

**śauca:** शौच “Purity.” See: *yama-niyama*.

**savikalpa samādhi:** सविकल्पसमाधि “Enstasy with form (or seed).” See: *samādhi*.

**sāyujya:** सायुज्य “Intimate union.” Perpetual God Consciousness.

**Self (Self God):** God Śiva’s perfection of Absolute Reality, Paraśiva—That which abides at the core of every soul. See: *Paramātmān, Paraśiva*.

**Self Realization:** Direct knowing of the Self God, Paraśiva. Self Realization is known in Sanskrit as *nirvikalpa samādhi*; “ecstasy without form or seed;” the ultimate spiritual attainment (also called *asamprajñata samādhi*). See: *God Realization*.

**sevā:** सेवा “Service,” *karma yoga*, an integral part of the spiritual path, doing selfless, useful work for others, such as volunteer work at a temple, without preference or thought of reward or personal gain. *Sevā*, or Sivathondur in Tamil, is the central practice of the *charyā pāda*. See: *yoga*.

**seval:** ேவல் The large, red, fighting rooster (*kukkuṭa* in Sanskrit) that adorns Lord Murugan’s flag. See: *Kārttikeya*.

**śaḍ darśana:** षड् दर्शन “Six views,” “six insights.” Six classical philosophies distinguished among the hundreds of Hindu *darśanas* known through history. Each was tersely formulated in *sūtra* form by its “founder” and elaborated in extensive commentaries by others. Elements of each form part of the Hindu fabric today. —**Nyāya:** “System, rule; logic.” —**Vaiśeṣika:** “Differentiation,” from *viśeṣa*, “differences.” —**Sāṅkhya:** “Enumeration, reckoning.” —**Yoga:** “Yoking; joining.” **Mīmāṃsā:** “Inquiry” —**Vedānta** “End (or culmination) of the *Vedas*.”

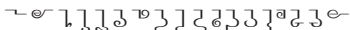
**shamanism (shamanic):** The religion of certain indigenous peoples of Northeast Asia, based on the belief in good and evil spirits who can be contacted and influenced by priests, or shamans, generally during a state of altered consciousness or trance. Descriptive of many of the world’s native, tribal faiths, and of various groups that today carry forward the practices and traditions of shamanism.

**Ṣaṇmukha:** षण्मुख “Six-faced.” A name for Lord Murugan or Kārttikeya, denoting the multiplicity of His divine functions.

**śaṭkoṇa:** षट्कोण “Six-pointed star,” formed by two interlock-

ing triangles, the upper one representing Śiva's transcendent Being, and the lower one Śiva's manifest energy, Śakti. See: *Ardhanārīśvara*, *Kārttikeya*.

**Shūm-Tyeif:** A Nātha mystical language of meditation (also simply known as Shūm) revealed in Switzerland in 1968 by Sivaya Subramuniyaswami. Its primary alphabet looks like this:



**siddha:** सिद्ध A “perfected one” or accomplished *yogī*, a person of great spiritual attainment or powers. See: *siddhi*.

**Siddha Siddhānta:** सिद्धसिद्धान्त See: *Śaivism*, *six schools*.

**siddhānta:** सिद्धान्त “Final attainments;” “final conclusions.” Ultimate understanding in any field.

**siddhānta śravaṇa (or śrāvaṇa):** सिद्धान्तश्रवण “Scriptural listening.” See: *yama-niyama*.

**siddhi:** सिद्धि “Power, accomplishment; perfection.” Extraordinary powers of the soul, developed through consistent meditation and deliberate, often uncomfortable and grueling *tapas*, or awakened naturally through spiritual maturity and *yogic sādhana*.

**śimantonayana:** सीमन्तोन्नयन “Hair-parting rite.” See: *saṁskāra*.

**sin:** Intentional transgression of divine law. Akin to the Latin *sons*, “guilty.” Hinduism does not view sin as a crime against God, but as an act against *dharma*—moral order—and one’s own self. Sin is an *adharmic* course of action which automatically brings negative consequences.

**śishya:** शिष्य “A pupil or disciple,” especially one who has proven himself and been accepted by a *guru*.

**Śiva:** शिव The “Auspicious,” “Gracious,” or “Kindly one.” Supreme Being of the Śaivite religion. God Śiva is All and in all, simultaneously the creator and the creation, both immanent and transcendent. As personal Deity, He is Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. He is a one Being, perhaps best understood in three perfections: Parameśvara (Primal Soul), Parāśakti (Pure Consciousness) and Paraśiva (Absolute Reality). See: *Parameśvara*, *Parāśakti*, *Paraśiva*,

*Naṭarāja, Sadāśiva, Śaivism.*

**Śiva Advaita:** शिवाद्वैत See: *Śaivism, six schools.*

**Śivāchārya:** शिवाचार्य The hereditary priests of the Śaiva Siddhānta tradition. The title of Ādiśaiva Brāhmins.

**Śivaliṅga:** शिवलिङ्ग “Mark,” “Token” or “Sign of Śiva.” The most prevalent emblem of Śiva, especially Paraśiva, found in virtually all Śiva temples. A rounded, elliptical, aniconic image, usually set on a circular base.

**Śivaloka:** शिवलोक “Realm of Śiva.” See: *loka.*

**Śivamaya:** शिवमय “Formed, made, consisting of” or “full of Śiva.” A part of the Śaivite affirmation of faith, denoting that all of existence consists of and is pervaded by Śiva. See: *māya, world.*

**Sivanadiyar:** சிவனடியார் “Servitor of Śiva.” Conveys a mystic relationship between the devotee and Śiva in which all spiritual, mental and physical actions are perceived as fulfilling the will and design of Śiva. See: *karma yoga.*

**Śivānanda:** शिवानन्द “Bliss of Śiva.”

**Śivaness:** Quality of being Śiva or like Śiva, especially sharing in His divine state of consciousness.

**Śiva Purāṇa:** शिवपुराण “Ancient [lore] of Śiva.” 1) A collection of six major scriptures sacred to Śaivites. 2) The name of the oldest of these six texts, though some consider it a version of the *Vāyu Purāṇa.*

**Śivarātri:** शिवरात्रि “Night of Śiva.” See: *Mahāśivarātri.*

**Śiva-Śakti:** शिवशक्ति Father-Mother God, both immanent and transcendent. A name for God Śiva encompassing His unmanifest Being and manifest energy. See: *Ardhanārīśvara, Primal Soul, Śakti, Śiva.*

**Śivasāyujya:** शिवसायुज्य “Intimate union with Śiva.” Becoming one with God. The state of perpetual Śiva consciousness; simultaneous perception of the inner and the outer. See: *jīvanmukti, kaivalya, moksha.*

**Sivathondan:** சிவதொண்டன் “Servant of Śiva.” Conveys the same mystic meaning as Sivanadiyar, denoting a devotee who regularly



performs actions dedicated to God Śiva; selfless work in service to others. See: *karma yoga*.

**Sivathondu:** சிவதொண்டு “Service to Śiva.” Akin to the concept of *karma yoga*. See: *karma yoga*.

**Skanda:** स्कन्द “Quicksilver;” “leaping one.” One of Lord Kārttikeya’s oldest names, and His form as scarlet-hued warrior God.

**Skanda Shashthi:** स्कन्दषष्ठी A six-day festival in October-November celebrating Lord Kārttikeya’s, or Skanda’s, victory over the forces of darkness.

**sloka:** श्लोक A verse, phrase, proverb or hymn of praise, usually composed in a specified meter. Especially a verse of two lines, each of sixteen syllables. See: *bhāshya*, *sūtra*.

**Smārta:** स्मार्त “Of or related to *smṛiti*,” the secondary Hindu scriptures. See: *Smārtism*.

**Smārta Sampradāya:** स्मार्तसंप्रदाय The teaching tradition of Hinduism’s Smārta sect, formalized by Adi Sankara in the 9th century. See: *Smārtism*.

**Smārtism:** स्मार्त Sect based on the secondary scriptures (*smṛiti*). The most liberal of the four major Hindu denominations, an ancient Vedic *brāhminical* tradition (ca 700 BCE) which from the 9th century onward was guided and deeply influenced by the Advaita Vedānta teachings of the reformist Adi Sankara.

**smṛiti:** स्मृति That which is “remembered;” the tradition. Hinduism’s nonrevealed, secondary but deeply revered scriptures, derived from man’s insight and experience. *Smṛiti* speaks of secular matters—science, law, history, agriculture, etc.—as well as spiritual lore, ranging from day-to-day rules and regulations to superconscious outpourings.

**social dharma:** (varṇa dharma). See: *dharma*.

**soul:** The real being of man, as distinguished from body, mind and emotions. The soul—known as *ātman* or *purusha*—is the sum of its two aspects, the form or body of the soul and the essence of the soul.

**Soundless Sound:** Paranāda. See: *nāda*.

**śraddhā:** श्रद्धा “Faith; belief.” See: *pañcha śraddhā*.

**śrāddha:** श्राद्ध Relating to commemorative ceremonies for the deceased, held one week, one month after death, and annually thereafter, according to tradition.

**śraddhā dhāraṇā:** श्रद्धाधारणा “Distillation of faith or belief.” A term used in *Dancing with Śiva* for *creed*, a concise synopsis of religious doctrine.

**śrī:** श्री “Radiant,” “excellent;” “honorable,” “eminent.” An honorific title prefixed to the names of Deities (e.g., Śrī Gaṇeśa); to the names of scriptural works (meaning holy, sacred), or eminent persons (Sir, Mr.). The feminine equivalent is *śrīmātī*.

**Śrī Chakra:** श्रीचक्र The most well known *yantra* and a central image in Śakta worship. Consisting of nine interlocking triangles, it is the design of Śiva-Śakti’s multidimensional manifestations. See: *yantra*.

**Śrī Rudram:** श्रीरुद्रम् “(Hymn) to the wielder of awesome powers.” Preeminent Vedic hymn to Lord Śiva as the God of dissolution, chanted daily in Śiva temples throughout India. It is in this long prayer, located in the *Yajur Veda*, *Taittiriya Samhitā*, in the middle of the first three *Vedas*, that the Śaivite *mantra Namaḥ Śivāya* first appears.

**śrīṣṭi:** सृष्टि “Creation.” See: *Naṭarāja*.

**śruti:** श्रुति That which is “heard.” Hinduism’s revealed scriptures, of supreme theological authority and spiritual value. They are timeless teachings transmitted to *rishis*, or seers, directly by God thousands of years ago. *Śruti* is thus said to be *apauruṣeya*, “supra-human.” *Śruti* consists of the *Vedas* and the *Āgamas*, preserved through oral tradition and eventually written down in Sanskrit. See: *Āgamas*, *Vedas*.

**sthapati:** स्थपति From *stha*, “building or place,” and *pati*, “lord or father.” A master architect of Āgamic temples.

**Sthāpatyaveda:** स्थापत्यवेद “Science of architecture.” A class of writings on architecture, sometimes classed as one of the *Upavedas*. It embodies such works as the *Mānasāra*, the *Vāstu Śāstras* and

- the architectural *Śilpa Śāstra*. See: *Upaveda*.
- sthiti:** स्थिति “Preservation.” See: *Naṭarāja*.
- Stoics:** Ancient Greek philosophers who held that all things are governed by natural laws and that the wise follow virtue and remain aloof from the external world and its passions.
- stri dharma:** स्त्रीधर्म “Womanly conduct.” See: *dharma*.
- subconscious mind:** *Samskāra chitta*. See: *mind (five states)*.
- śubha muhūrta:** शुभमुहूर्त “Auspicious time.” A range of time when specified activities are most likely to thrive and succeed. See: *muhūrta*.
- Subramanya:** सुब्रमण्य “Very pious; dear to holy men.” A Name of Lord Kārttikeya. See: *kārttikeya*.
- Subramuniyaswami:** சுப்பிரமணியசுவாமி Author of *Dancing with Śiva*, 162nd *satguru* (1927–2001) of the Nandinātha Sampradāya’s Kailāsa Paramparā. He was recognized worldwide as one of foremost Hindu ministers of our times, contributing to the revival of Hinduism in immeasurable abundance. He was simultaneously a staunch defender of traditions, as the tried and proven ways of the past, and a fearless innovator, setting new patterns of life for contemporary humanity. For a brief biography of this remarkable seer and renaissance *guru*, see *About the Author* on page 339.
- sub-subconscious mind:** *Vāsanā chitta*. See: *mind (five states)*.
- subsuperconscious mind:** *Anukāraṇa chitta*. See: *mind (five states)*.
- subtle body:** *Sūkshma śarīra*, the nonphysical, astral body or vehicle in which the soul encases itself to function in the Antarloka, or subtle world.
- subtle plane:** See: *loka, three worlds*.
- śūdra:** शूद्र “Worker, servant.” The social class of skilled artisans, workers and laborers. See: *varṇa dharma*.
- Śukla Yajur Veda:** शुक्लयजुर्वेद See: *Yajur Veda*.
- superconscious mind:** *Kāraṇa chitta*. See: *mind (five states)*, *mind (three phases)*.
- Supreme God:** Highest God, the source or creator of all other

Gods, beings and all manifestation.

**Surdas (Sūrdās):** सूरदास Blind North-Indian Vaishṇava poet (ca 1550), famous for his devotional hymns to Lord Kṛishṇa. His massive writing *Sūrsagar*, “Sur’s Ocean,” is widely read.

**surrender:** Giving up or yielding. Surrender to the Divine is called *prapatti*, a complete giving over of oneself to God’s will in total trust and abandonment. See: *bhakti*, *prapatti*, *sacrifice*.

**Sūrya:** सूर्य “Sun.” One of the principal Divinities of the *Vedas*, also prominent in the epics and *Purāṇas*. Śaivites revere Sūrya, the Sun God each morning as Śiva Sūrya. Smārtas and Vaishṇavas revere the golden orb as Sūrya Nārāyaṇa. As the source of light, the sun is the most readily apparent image of Divinity available to man.

**sushumṇā nāḍī:** सुषुम्णानाडी “Most gracious channel.” Central psychic nerve current within the spinal column. See: *kuṇḍalinī*, *nāḍī*, *samādhī*.

**sūtra:** सूत्र “Thread.” An aphoristic verse; the literary style consisting of such maxims. From 500 BCE, this style was widely adopted by Indian philosophical systems and eventually employed in works on law, grammar, medicine, poetry, crafts, etc. See: *bhāshya*, *wedding pendant*.

**svadharma:** स्वधर्म “One’s own way.” See: *dharma*.

**svādhishṭhāna:** स्वाधिष्ठान “One’s own base.” See: *chakra*.

**svādhyāya:** स्वाध्याय “Self-reflection; personal scriptural study.” See: *yama-niyama*.

**svarga:** स्वर्ग “Abode of light.” An intermediate realm of the Antar-loka; a term essentially synonymous with *Svarloka*. See: *loka*.

**swāmī:** स्वामी “Lord; owner; self-possessed.” He who knows or is master of himself. A respectful title for a Hindu monk, usually a *sannyāsin*, an initiated, orange-robed renunciate, dedicated wholly to religious life. As a sign of respect, the term *swāmī* is sometimes applied more broadly to include non-monastics dedicated to spiritual work. See: *monk*, *sannyāsa dharma*, *sannyāsin*.

**swāminī:** स्वामिनी The feminine form of *swāmī*. See: *monastic*,

*nun, sannyāsa, swāmī.*

**swastika:** स्वस्तिक “Sign of auspiciousness.” From *su*, “wellness,” “auspiciousness” and *astu*, “be it so.” The ancient Hindu symbol of good fortune, representing the sun and often associated with Gaṇeśa. The right-angled arms of the *swastika* denote the indirect way in which Divinity is reached: through intuition and not by intellect. It has been a prominent symbol in many cultures. See: *mūrti*.

**T Tagore, Rabindranath:** One of India’s most highly acclaimed writers and poets (1861–1941), son of Devendranath Tagore.

**Tai Pongal:** தைப்பொங்கல் A four-day home festival held in the Tamil month of Tai (January–February), celebrating the season’s first harvest.

**Tai Pusam:** தைபூசம் A festival held on the Pushya *nakshatra* near the full-moon day of January–February to worship Lords Śiva or Kārttikeya, depending on the locality. It is an important Tamil holiday, often marked by the carrying of *kavadi*. See: *Kārttikeya, kavadi*.

**tamas(ic):** तमस् “Force of inertia.” See: *guṇa*.

**Tamil:** தமிழ் The ancient Dravidian language of the Tamils, a Caucasoid people of South India and Northern Sri Lanka, who have now migrated throughout the world. The official language of the state of Tamil Nadu, India, spoken by 60 million people.

**tāṇḍava:** ताण्डव “Violent dance.” Any vigorous dance sequence performed by a male dancer. There are many forms of *tāṇḍava*. Its prototype is Śiva’s dance of bliss, *ānanda tāṇḍava*.

**tantra:** तन्त्र “Loom, methodology.” 1) Most generally, a synonym for *śāstra*, “scripture.” 2) A synonym for the Āgamic texts, especially those of the Śākta faith, a class of Hindu scripture providing detailed instruction on all aspects of religion, mystic knowledge and science. The *tantras* are also associated with the Śaiva tradition. 3) A specific method, technique or spiritual practice within the Śaiva and Śākta traditions. 4) Disciplines and techniques with a

strong emphasis on worship of the feminine force, often involving sexual encounters, with the purported goal of transformation and union with the Divine.

**Tao:** “The way.” The central concept of the Chinese religion called Taoism. Though traditionally considered impossible to translate, *Tao* is often rendered as “cosmic order,” akin to the Sanskrit *rita*. See: *dharma*.

**tapas:** तपस् “Heat, fire; ardor.” Purificatory spiritual disciplines, severe austerity, penance and sacrifice. The endurance of pain, suffering, through the performance of extreme penance, religious austerity and mortification.

**tapasvin:** तपस्विन् One who performs *tapas* or is in the state of *tapas*. See: *tapas*.

**Tat:** तत् “That;” the indescribable Absolute; Supreme.

**Tat Sat:** तत् सत् “That (is) Truth.” A terse phrase pointing to the inexpressible truth of which nothing more can be said.

**tattva:** तत्त्व “That-ness” or “essential nature.” *Tattvas* are the primary principles, elements, states or categories of existence, the building blocks of the universe.

**Tayumanavar:** தாயுமானவர் A Tamil Śaivayogī, devotional mystic and poet saint (ca 17th century) whose writings are a harmonious blend of philosophy and devotion. In his poem “Chinmayānanda Guru,” Tayumanavar places himself in the lineage of Rishi Tirumular. See: *Tirumular*.

**teradi:** தேரடி “Chariot shed.” Tamil term for the “garage” shelter that houses the temple cart or chariot (*ter*).

**That:** When capitalized, this simple demonstrative refers uniquely to the Ultimate, Indescribable or Nameless Absolute. The Self God, Paraśiva.

**theism:** Belief that God exists as a real, conscious, personal Supreme Being, creator and ruler of the universe. May also include belief in the Gods.

**Third World:** Śivaloka, “realm of Śiva,” or Kāraṇaloka. The spiritual realm or causal plane of existence wherein Mahādevas and

highly evolved souls live in their own self-effulgent forms. See: *loka, Śivaloka, three worlds*.

**thither:** Toward that place; there. Farther.

**three worlds:** The three worlds of existence, *triloka*, are the primary hierarchical divisions of the cosmos. 1) Bhūloka: “Earth world,” the physical plane. 2) Antarloka: “Inner or in-between world,” the subtle or astral plane. 3) Śivaloka: “World of Śiva,” and of the Gods and highly evolved souls; the causal plane, also called Kāraṇaloka.

**tilaka:** तिलक Marks made on the forehead or the brow with clay, ashes or sandalwood paste as an indication of sectarian affiliation. See: *bindu, tripunḍra*.

**tirobhāva:** तिरोभाव “Concealment,” same as *tirodhāna*. See: *Naṭarāja, tirodhāna śakti*.

**tirodhāna śakti:** तिरोधानशक्ति “Concealing power.” Veiling grace, or God’s power to obscure the soul’s divine nature. *Tirodhāna śakti* is the particular energy of Śiva that binds the three bonds of *āṇava, karma, māyā* to the soul. It is a purposeful limiting of consciousness to give the opportunity to the soul to grow and mature through experience of the world. See: *evolution of the soul*.

**tīrthayātrā:** तीर्थयात्रा “Journeying to a holy place.” Pilgrimage. One of the five sacred Hindu duties (*pañcha nitya karmas*), to journey periodically to one of the innumerable holy spots in India or other countries.

**tiru:** திரு “Sacred; holy.” The exact Tamil equivalent of *śrī*. Feminine is *tirumati*. See: *śrī*.

**Tirukural:** திருக்குறள் “Holy couplets.” A treasury of Hindu ethical insight and a literary masterpiece of the Tamil language, written by Śaiva Saint Tiruvalluvar (ca 200 BCE) near present-day Chennai. One of the world’s earliest ethical texts, the *Tirukural* could well be considered a bible on virtue for the human race. See: *Tiruvalluvar*.

**Tirumantiram:** திருமந்திரம் “Holy incantation.” The Nandinātha Sampradāya’s oldest Tamil scripture; written ca 200 BCE by Rishi

**Tirumular.** It is the earliest of the *Tirumurai* texts, and a vast storehouse of esoteric *yogic* and *tantric* knowledge. It contains the mystical essence of *rāja yoga* and *siddha yoga*, and the fundamental doctrines of the 28 *Śaiva Siddhānta Āgamas*, which are the heritage of the ancient pre-historic traditions of Śaivism. As the *Āgamas* themselves are now partially lost, the 3,047-verse *Tirumantiram* is a rare source of the complete *Āgamanta* (collection of Āgamic lore). See: *Tirumular, Tirumurai*.

**Tirumular:** திருமுலர் An illustrious *siddha yogī* and *ṛishi* of the Nandinātha Sampradāya's Kailāsa Paramparā who came from the Himalayas (ca 200 BCE) to Tamil Nadu to compose the *Tirumantiram*. In this scripture he recorded the tenets of Śaivism in concise and precise verse form, based upon his own realizations and the supreme authority of the *Śaiva Āgamas* and the *Vedas*. Tirumular was a disciple of Maharishi Nandinatha. See: *Kailāsa Paramparā, Tirumantiram, Vedānta*.

**Tirumurai:** திருமுறை "Holy book." A twelve-book collection of hymns and writings of South Indian Śaivite saints, compiled by Saint Nambiyandar Nambi (ca 1000). The first seven books are known as *Devarams*.

**Tiruvalluvar:** திருவள்ளுவர் "Holy weaver." Tamil weaver and householder saint (ca 200 BCE) who wrote the classic Śaivite ethical scripture *Tirukural*. He lived with his wife Vasuki, famed for her remarkable loyalty and virtues, near modern-day Chennai. See: *Tirukural*.

**tithe (tithing):** The spiritual discipline, often a *vrata*, of giving one tenth of one's gainful and gifted income to a religious organization of one's choice, thus sustaining spiritual education and upliftment on earth. The Sanskrit equivalent is *daśamāṁśa*, called *makimai* in the Tamil tradition. See: *daśamāṁśa*.

**tithi:** திதி A lunar day, approximately one-thirtieth of the time it takes the moon to orbit the Earth. Because of their means of calculation (based on the difference of the longitudinal angle between the position of sun and the moon), *tithis* may vary in



length. There are 15 *tithis* in each fortnight (half month). Most Hindu festivals are calculated according to the *tithis*.

**transcendent:** Surpassing the limits of experience or manifest form. In Śaiva Siddhānta, a quality of God Śiva as Absolute Reality, Paraśiva, the Self. Distinguished from immanent. See: *atattva*, *Paraśiva*.

**trident:** Three-pronged spear. See: *triśūla*.

**trikoṇa:** त्रिकोण A triangle; symbol of God Śiva as Absolute Reality. Also represents the element fire.

**Trimūrti:** त्रिमूर्ति A classic representation of God as the threefold Deity image—Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra. See: *Brahmā*.

**triple bondage:** See: *mala*, *pāśa*.

**tripuṇḍra:** त्रिपुण्ड्र “Three marks.” The Śaivite sectarian mark, consisting of three horizontal lines of *vibhūti* (holy ash) on the brow, often with a dot (*bindu*) at the third eye. The three lines represent the soul’s three bonds: *āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā*. See: *bindu*, *tilaka*, *vibhūti*.

**triśūla:** त्रिशूल A three-pronged spear or trident wielded by Lord Śiva and certain Śaivite ascetics. Symbolizes God’s three fundamental *śaktis* or powers—*icchā* (desire, will, love), *kriyā* (action) and *jñāna* (wisdom).

**Truth:** When capitalized, ultimate knowing which is unchanging. Lower case (truth): honesty, integrity, virtue.

**Tryambaka:** त्र्यम्बक “Three-eyed one.” A name of Rudra-Śiva, one of the Ekādaśa (“eleven”) Rudras.

**Tukaram (Tukārām):** तुकाराम One of the most beloved and widely-read Maharashtra Sant poets (1598–1649) who wrote passionate songs urging devotees to seek the grace of Lord Viṣṇu.

**Tulsidas (Tulasidāsa):** तुलसीदास Vaishṇava *sannyāsin* poet (ca 1532–1623) whose *Śrī Rāmācharitamānasa*, a Hindi rendering of Valmiki’s Sanskrit epic, *Rāmāyaṇa*, is acclaimed one of the world’s greatest literary works. See: *Rāmāyaṇa*.

**Tyēf:** A special script, like bamboo sticks, used for writing prayers to be conveyed to the inner worlds through the sacred fire. See:

*lekhaprārtha havana.*

**tyāga:** त्याग “Letting go, detachment, renunciation.” Described in the *Bhagavad Gītā* as the basic principle of *karma yoga*, detachment from the fruits of one’s actions. See: *sacrifice, sannyāsa, vairāgya.*

**U ucchishṭa:** उच्छिष्ट “Leavings; remainder.” Religiously, the leavings from the *guru*’s food plate or the waters from the bathing of his feet or sandals which are ingested by devotees as *prasāda* (blessed offerings).

**universal dharma:** Cosmic order, *ṛita*. See: *dharma*.

**universal dissolution:** The final stage in the recurring cosmic cycles of creation in which all manifestation is reabsorbed into God. See: *mahāpralaya*.

**universalist:** Applicable to all; including everyone or all groups. Any doctrine that emphasizes principles, beliefs or theologies that are or could be acceptable to many or all people, especially as contrasted with sectarian, denominational perspectives. See: *neo-Indian religion, syncretism*.

**unmanifest:** Not evident or perceivable. Philosophically, akin to *transcendent*. God Śiva is unmanifest in His formless perfection, *Paraśiva*. See: *formless*.

**unoriginated:** Never begun or created. God Śiva is unoriginated as He has no beginning. See: *atattva, Paraśiva, Primal Soul*.

**upadeśa:** उपदेश “Advice; religious instruction.” Often given in question-and-answer form from *guru* to disciple. The *satguru*’s spiritual discourses.

**upadeśī:** उपदेशी A liberated soul who chooses to teach and actively help others to reach the goal of liberation. Contrasted with *nirvāṇī*. See: *nirvāṇī and upadeśī, satguru*.

**Upāgama:** उपागम Secondary *Āgama*. A large body of texts and similar in character to the principle *Āgamas*. Each of the 28 *Siddhānta Śaiva Āgamas* has as many as 16 *Upāgamas* associated with it, giving more specific or elaborate information on the basic text;

their total number is given as 207 or 208.

**upagrantha:** उपग्रन्थ “Secondary text.” Appendices or additional resources of a book. See: *Grantha*.

**upanayana:** उपनयन “Bringing near.” A youth’s formal initiation into Vedic study under a *guru*, traditionally as a resident of his *āśrama*, and the investiture of the sacred thread (*yajñopavīta* or *upavīta*), signifying entrance into one of the three upper castes. See: *saṁskāras of childhood*.

**Upanishad:** उपनिषद् “Sitting near devotedly.” The fourth and final portion of the *Vedas*, expounding the secret, philosophical meaning of the Vedic hymns. The *Upanishads* are a collection of profound texts which are the source of Vedānta and have dominated Indian thought for thousands of years. They are philosophical chronicles of *ṛishis* expounding the nature of God, soul and cosmos, exquisite renderings of the deepest Hindu thought. The number of *Upanishads* is given as 108. See: *śruti*, *Vedānta*, *Vedas*.

**upāsana:** उपासना “Sitting near.” Worship or contemplation of God. One of the *pañcha nitya karmas*. “five constant duties.” See: *sandhyā upāsana*.

**Upaveda:** उपवेद “Subsidiary *Vedas*.” A class of texts on sacred sciences, composed by *ṛishis* over the course of time to amplify and apply the Vedic knowledge. The four prominent *Upavedas* (each encompassing numerous texts) are: *Arthaveda* (statecraft), *Āyurveda* (health), *Dhanurveda* (military science) and *Gāndharvaveda* (music and the arts). Also sometimes classed as *Upavedas* are the *Sthāpatyaveda* (on architecture) and the *Kāma Śāstras* (texts on erotic love). See: *Arthaveda*, *Āyurveda*, *Dhanurveda*, *Gāndharvaveda*, *Kāma Sūtra*, *purushārtha*, *Sthāpatyaveda*.

**utsava:** उत्सव “Festival.” Religious celebrations or holy days and their observance in the home and temple. *Utsava* is one of the five constant duties, *pañcha nitya karmas*. See: *festival*.

**V** *Vachana*: वचन “Utterance.” Short, insightful devotional poems written by the early Vīra Śaiva śaraṇā saints. Full of wit and brilliant philosophy, they are the basis for Liṅgāyat philosophy and practice.

**vāgdāna**: वाग्दान “Word-giving.” Marriage engagement ceremony. See: *saṁskāras of adulthood*.

**vāhana**: वाहन “Bearing, carrying or conveying.” Each Hindu God is depicted as riding an animal or bird *vāhana*, which is symbolic of a function of the God. For example, Śiva rides the bull, a symbol of strength and potency.

**vaidya**: वैद्य “Versed in science; learned; a doctor.” See: *āyurveda vaidya*.

**Vaikāsi Viśākham**: வைகாசி விசாகம் A festival held on Viśākha *nakshatra*, near the full moon day of the Tamil month of Vaikāsi, May-June, to celebrate the creation, or “birth,” of Lord Kārttikeya. It is a time of gift-giving to *paṇḍitas* and great souls, weddings, feedings for the poor, caring for trees, spiritual initiation and conclaves of holy men.

**vairāgi**: वैरागी “Dispassionate one.” An ascetic who lives by the principle of *vairāgya*. Also names a particular class of mendicants, generally Vaishṇavas, of North India who have freed themselves from worldly desires. See: *monk, sannyāsa, tyāga*.

**vairāgya**: वैराग्य “Dispassion; aversion.” Freedom from passion. Distaste or disgust for worldliness because of spiritual awakening. Also, the constant renunciation of obstacles on the path to liberation. Ascetic or monastic life.

**Vaiśeshika**: वैशेषिक “Distinctionism;” “differentiation.” A philosophical school (ca 600 BCE) that focuses on understanding the categories of existence. See: *śaḍ darśana*.

**Vaishṇava**: वैष्णव Of or relating to Viṣṇu; same as Vaishṇavite. A follower of Lord Viṣṇu or His incarnations. See: *Vaishṇavism, Viṣṇu*.

**Vaishṇavism (Vaishṇava)**: वैष्णव One of the four major religions, or denominations of Hinduism, representing roughly half of the

world's one billion Hindus. It gravitates around the worship of Lord Viṣṇu as Personal God, His incarnations and their consorts. Vaiṣṇavism stresses the personal aspect of God over the impersonal, and *bhakti* (devotion) as the true path to salvation.

**Vaiṣṇavite:** Of or relating to Viṣṇu; same as Vaiṣṇava. A follower of Viṣṇu or His incarnations. See: *Vaiṣṇavism*, *Viṣṇu*.

**vaiśya:** वैश्य “Landowner; merchant.” The social class of bankers, businessmen, industrialists; employers. Merchant class, originally those whose business was trade as well as agriculture. See: *varṇa dharma*.

**valipadu:** வழிபாடு “Ritual worship; revering, following.” The acts of adoration of the divine, expressed in many practices and ways, especially as *pūjā* in temples.

**Vallabhacharya (Vallabhāchārya):** वल्लभाचार्य “Beloved teacher.” Vaiṣṇava saint (ca 1475-1530) whose panentheistic Śuddha Advaita (pure nondualism) philosophy became the teaching of the nonascetic Vaiṣṇava sect that bears his name. See: *Vedānta*.

**vānaprastha āśrama:** वानप्रस्थ आश्रम “Forest-dweller stage.” See: *āśrama dharma*, *śaṣṭyābda pūrti*.

**varṇa:** वर्ण “External appearance,” covering; type, species, kind, color; caste. See: *varṇa dharma*.

**varṇa dharma:** वर्णधर्म “The way of one's kind.” The hereditary social class system, generally referred to as *caste*, established in India in ancient times. Within *varṇa dharma* are the many religious and moral codes which define human virtue. *Varṇa dharma* is social duty, in keeping with the principles of good conduct, according to one's community, which is generally based on the craft or occupation of the family. — **jāti:** “Birth; position assigned by birth; rank, caste, family, race, lineage.” *Jāti*, more than *varṇa*, is the specific determinant of one's social community. Traditionally, because of rules of purity each *jāti* is excluded from social interaction with the others, especially from interdining and intermarriage. See: *dharma*, *Dharma Śāstras*, *jāti*.

**varṇāśrama dharma:** वर्णाश्रमधर्म “The way of one's caste and

stage of life.” Names the social structure of four classes (*varṇa*), hundreds of castes (*jāti*) and four stages of life (*āśramas*). It is the combined principles of *varṇa dharma* and *āśrama dharma*. See: *āśrama dharma, dharma, varṇa dharma*.

**vāsanā:** वासना “Abode.” Subconscious inclinations. From *vās*, “dwelling, residue, remainder.” The subliminal inclinations and habit patterns which, as driving forces, color and motivate one’s attitudes and future actions.

**Vasugupta:** वसुगुप्त Celebrated preceptor (ca 800) whose finding of the *Śiva Sūtras* catalyzed the reemergence of the ancient Kāshmir Śaiva tradition. See: *Kāshmir Śaivism*.

**vaṭa:** वट The banyan tree, *Ficus indica*, sacred to Śiva. Thought to derive from *vaṭ*, “to surround, encompass”—also called *nyagrodha*, “growing downwards.” Ancient symbol of the Sanātana Dharma.

**vāta:** वात “Fluctuation.” *Vāyu*, “wind, air-ether.” One of the three bodily humors, called *dosha*, *vāta* is known as the air humor. Principle of circulation in the body. *Vāta dosha* governs such functions as breathing and movement of the muscles and tissues. See: *āyurveda, dosha*.

**Veda:** वेद “Wisdom.” Sagely revelations which comprise Hinduism’s most authoritative scripture. They, along with the *Āgamas*, are *śruti*, that which is “heard.” The *Vedas* are a body of dozens of holy texts known collectively as the *Veda*, or as the four *Vedas*: *Rig*, *Yajur*, *Sāma* and *Atharva*. In all they include over 100,000 verses, as well as additional prose. The knowledge imparted by the *Vedas* ranges from earthy devotion to high philosophy.

**Vedāṅga:** वेदाङ्ग “*Veda-limb*.” Six branches of post-Vedic studies revered as auxiliary to the *Vedas*. Four *Vedāṅgas* govern correct chanting of the *Vedas*: 1) *Śikshā* (phonetics), 2) *Chandas* (meter), 3) *Nirukta* (etymology), 4) *Vyākaraṇa* (grammar). The two other *Vedāṅgas* are 5) *Jyotisha Vedāṅga* (astronomy-astrology) and 6) *Kalpa Vedāṅga* (procedural canon) which includes the *Śrauta* and *Śulba Śāstras* (ritual codes), *Dharma Śāstras* (social law) and

*Grihya Śāstras* (domestic codes).

**Vedānta:** वेदान्त “Ultimate wisdom” or “final conclusions of the *Vedas*.” Vedānta is the system of thought embodied in the *Upanishads* (ca 1500–600 BCE), which give forth the ultimate conclusions of the *Vedas*. Through history there developed numerous Vedānta schools, ranging from pure dualism to absolute monism.

**Vedic-Āgamic:** Simultaneously drawing from and complying with both of Hinduism’s revealed scriptures (*śruti*), *Vedas* and *Āgamas*, which represent two complimentary, intertwining streams of history and tradition.

**veiling grace:** *Tirobhāva śakti*. The divine power that limits the soul’s perception by binding or attaching the soul to the bonds of *āṇava*, *karma*, and *māyā*—enabling it to grow and evolve as an individual being.

**vel:** வேல் “Spear, lance.” The symbol of Lord Kārttikeya’s divine authority as Lord of *yoga* and commander of the *devas*. (Known as *śūla* in Sanskrit.) See: *Kārttikeya*.

**veshti:** வேஷ்டி A long, unstitched cloth like a sarong, wound about the waist and reaching below the ankles. Traditional Hindu apparel for men. It can be wrapped in many different styles. A Tamil word derived from the Sanskrit *veshṭana*, “encircling.” Also called *vetti* (Tamil) or *dhoti* (Hindi).

**vibhūti:** विभूति “Resplendent, powerful.” Holy ash, prepared by burning cow dung along with other precious substances, milk, *ghee*, honey, etc. It symbolizes purity and is one of the main sacraments given at *pūjā* in all Śaivite temples and shrines.

**videhamukti:** विदेहमुक्ति “Disembodied liberation.” Release from reincarnation through *nirvikalpa samādhi*—the realization of the Self, Paraśiva—at the point of death.

**vidyārambha:** विद्यारंभ The “commencement of learning” sacrament. See: *saṁskāra*.

**Vighneśvara:** विघ्नेश्वर “Lord of Obstacles.” A name for Lord Gaṇeśa describing His power to both remove and create obstacles to guide souls along the right path. See: *Gaṇeśa*.

**vijñānamaya kośa:** विज्ञानमयकोश “Sheath of cognition.” The soul’s mental or cognitive-intuitive sheath, also called the actinodic sheath. See: *kośa*, *mental body*, *soul*.

**Vināyaka:** विनायक “Remover.” A name of Lord Gaṇeśa, meaning the remover of obstacles (sometimes preceded by *vighna*, “obstacle”). See: *Gaṇeśa*.

**Vināyaka Vratam:** விநாயகவிரதம் A 21-day festival to Lord Gaṇeśa beginning on the full-moon day of November-December, when devotees make a vow (*vrata*), such as to attend the daily *pūjā*, or to fast by taking only one meal a day.

**Vīra Śaivism (Śaiva):** வீரசைவ “Heroic Śaivism.” Made prominent by Basavanna in the 12th century. Also called Liṅgāyat Śaivism. Followers, called Liṅgāyats, Liṅgavantas or Śivaśaraṇās, always wear a Śivaliṅga on their person. Vīra Śaivites are proudly egalitarian and emphasize the personal relationship with Śiva, rather than temple worship. In Vīra Śaivism, Śiva divides from His Absolute state into Liṅga (Supreme Lord) and āṅga, individual soul, the two eventually reuniting in undifferentiated oneness. Early on, they rejected *brāhminical* authority, and along with it the entire caste system and the *Vedas*.

**virginal:** Characteristic of a virgin. Pure. —**virginal God:** Reference to Lord Kārttikeya, the perpetual bachelor, descriptive of His inherent purity.

**visarjana:** विसर्जन “Departure.” See: *Gaṇeśa Chaturthī*.

**Vishṇu:** विष्णु “All-pervasive.” Supreme Deity of the Vaishṇavite religion. God as personal Lord and Creator, the All-Loving Divine Personality, who periodically incarnates and lives a fully human life to reestablish *dharma* whenever necessary. In Śaivism, Vishṇu is Śiva’s aspect as Preserver. See: *Vaishṇavism*.

**Viśiṣṭādvaita:** विशिष्टद्वैत “Qualified nondualism.” Best known as the term used by Ramanuja (ca 1017-1137) to name his Vaishṇava Vedānta philosophy, which is nondualistic in that the ultimate truth or reality is one, not two, and souls are in fact part of God. And it is “qualified” in that souls are *fully* one with God,



but not identical.

**viśuddha chakra:** विशुद्धचक्र “Wheel of purity.” The fifth *chakra*. Center of divine love. See: *chakra*.

**viśvagrāsa:** विश्वग्रास “Total absorption.” The final merger of the soul in Śiva at the fulfillment of its evolution. It is the ultimate union of the individual soul body with the body of Śiva—Parameśvara—within the Śivaloka, whence the soul was first emanated.

**vivāha:** विवाह “Marriage.” See: *saṁskāras*.

**Vivekananda, Swami (Vivekānanda):** विवेकानन्द [1863-1902] Disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, credited, along with Tagore, Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan and others, with sparking the modern Hindu revival.

**void:** An empty space. Philosophically, emptiness itself. The absence of time, form and space. God Śiva in His perfection as Paraśiva, as a sacred void, but not “like the emptiness inside of an empty box....[It] is the fullness of everything.” See: *Paraśiva*.

**vrata:** व्रत “Vow, religious oath.” Often a vow to perform certain disciplines, such as penance, fasting, specific *mantra* repetitions, worship or meditation.

**vr̥tti:** वृत्ति “Whirlpool, vortex.” In *yoga* psychology, the fluctuations of consciousness, the waves of mental activity (*chitta vr̥tti*) of thought and perception.

**Warp and woof:** *Warp* names the lengthwise threads that give structure to the cloth; *woof* denotes the crossing threads that give design and color. The very fiber or essence of a thing.

**wealth:** *Artha*. Abundance; financial stability. See: *purushārtha*.

**wedding pendant:** A gold ornament worn by the Hindu wife around the neck representing her vows of matrimony. Known as *maṅgala sūtra* in Sanskrit, and *tali* in Tamil.

**Yajña:** यज्ञ “Worship; sacrifice.” 1) Ritual in which oblations—*ghee*, grains, spices and exotic woods—are offered into a fire. 2) Acts of worship or sacrifice.

**Yajur Veda:** यजुर्वेद “Wisdom of sacrificial formulas.” One of the four bodies of revelatory texts (*Rig, Sāma, Yajur* and *Atharva*). This *Veda* is a special collection of hymns to be chanted during *yajña*. See: *Vedas*.

**Yama:** यम “The restrainer.” Hindu God of death; oversees the processes of death transition. See: *death*.

**yama-niyama:** यम नियम The first two of the eight limbs of *rāja yoga*, constituting Hinduism’s fundamental ethical codes, the *yamas* and *niyamas* are the essential foundation for all spiritual progress. Here are the ten traditional *yamas* and ten *niyamas*. —**yamas:** 1) *ahimsā*: “Noninjury.” Not harming others by thought, word, or deed. 2) *satya*: “Truthfulness.” Refraining from lying and betraying promises. 3) *asteya*: “Nonstealing.” Neither stealing, nor coveting nor entering into debt. 4) *brahmacharya*: “Divine conduct.” Controlling lust by remaining celibate when single, leading to faithfulness in marriage. 5) *kshamā*: “Patience.” Restraining intolerance with people and impatience with circumstances. 6) *dhṛiti*: “Steadfastness.” Overcoming nonperseverance, fear, indecision and changeableness. 7) *dayā*: “Compassion.” Conquering callous, cruel and insensitive feelings toward all beings. 8) *ārjava*: “Honesty, straightforwardness.” Renouncing deception and wrongdoing. 9) *mitāhāra*: “Moderate appetite.” Neither eating too much nor consuming meat, fish, fowl or eggs. 10) *śauca*: “Purity.” Avoiding impurity in body, mind and speech. —**niyamas:** 1) *hrī*: “Remorse.” Being modest and showing shame for misdeeds. 2) *santosa*: “Contentment.” Seeking joy and serenity in life. 3) *dāna*: “Giving.” Tithing and giving generously without thought of reward. 4) *āstikya*: “Faith.” Believing firmly in God, Gods, *guru* and the path to enlightenment. 5) *Īśvarapūjana*: “Worship of the Lord.” The cultivation of devotion through daily worship and meditation. 6) *siddhānta śravaṇa*: “Scriptural audition.” Studying the teachings and listening to the wise of one’s lineage. 7) *mati*: “Cognition.” Developing a spiritual will and intellect with the *guru*’s guidance. 8) *vrata*: “Sacred vows.” Fulfilling religious vows, rules

and observances faithfully. 9) **japa**: “Recitation.” Chanting *mantras* daily. 10) **tapas**: “Austerity.” Performing *sādhana*, penance, *tapas* and sacrifice. Patanjali lists the *yamas* as: *ahimsā*, *satya*, *asteya*, *brahmacharya* and *aparigraha* (noncovetousness); and the *niyamas* as: *śauca*, *santosha*, *tapas*, *svādhyāya* (self-reflection, private scriptural study) and *Īśvarapraṇidhāna* (worship). See: *rāja yoga*.

**yantra**: यन्त्र “Vessel; container.” A mystic diagram composed of geometric and alphabetic figures—usually etched on small plates of gold, silver or copper. Sometimes rendered in three dimensions in stone or metal. The purpose of a *yantra* is to focus spiritual and mental energies according to computer-like *yantric* pattern, be it for health, wealth, childbearing or the invoking of one God or another.

**yoga**: योग “Union.” From *yuj*, “to yoke, harness, unite.” The philosophy, process, disciplines and practices whose purpose is the yoking of individual consciousness with transcendent or divine consciousness.

**yoga pāda**: योगपाद The third of the successive stages in spiritual unfoldment in Śaiva Siddhānta, wherein the goal is Self Realization. See: *pāda*, *yoga*.

**Yogaswami** (Yogaswāmī): யோகசுவாமி “Master of *yoga*.” Sri Lanka’s most renowned contemporary spiritual master (1872–1964), a Sivajñāni and Nātha *siddhar* revered by both Hindus and Buddhists. He was trained by Satguru Chellappaswami, from whom he received *guru dīkshā*. Sage Yogaswami was the *satguru* of Sivaya Subramuniaswami. Yogaswami conveyed his teachings songs called *Natchintanai*, “good thoughts.” See: *Kailāsa Paramparā*.

**yogi**: योगी One who practices *yoga*.

**yogini**: योगिनी Feminine counterpart of *yogī*.

**yuga**: युग “Eon,” “age.” One of four ages which chart the duration of the world according to Hindu thought: *Satya* (or *Ṛita*), *Tretā*, *Dvāpara* and *Kali*. See: *cosmic cycle*.

## Sanskrit Pronunciation

### Śabda Kośaḥ

### शब्दकोशः

#### VOWELS

Vowels marked like ā are sounded twice as long as short vowels. The four diphthongs, *e, ai, o, au*, are always sounded long, but never marked as such.

अ	a	as in about
आ	ā	...tar, father
इ	i	...fill, lily
ई	ī	...machine
उ	u	...full, bush
ऊ	ū	...allude
ऋ	ṛi	...merrily
ॠ	ṛī	...marine
ऌ	ḷi	...revelry
ॡ	ḷī	...prey
ए	e	...prey
ऐ	ai	...aisle
ओ	o	...go, stone
औ	au	...Haus

#### GUTTURAL CONSONANTS

Sounded in the throat.

क्	k	...kite, seek
ख	kh	...inkhorn
ग	g	...gamble
घ	gh	...loghouse
ङ	ṅ	...sing

#### PALATAL CONSONANTS

Sounded at the roof of the mouth.

च	ch	...church
छ	ch	...much harm
ज	j	...jump
झ	jh	...hedgehog
ञ	ñ	...hinge

#### CEREBRAL CONSONANTS

Tongue turned up and back against the roof of the mouth. (Also known as retroflex.)

ट	ṭ	...true
ठ	ṭh	...nuthook
ड	ḍ	...drum
ढ	ḍh	...redhaired
ण	ṇ	...none

#### DENTAL CONSONANTS

Sounded with the tip of the tongue at the back of the upper front teeth.

त	t	...tub
थ	th	...anthill
द	d	...dot
ध	dh	...adhere
न	n	...not

**LABIAL CONSONANTS**

Sounded at the lips.

प	p	...pot
फ	ph	...path
ब	b	...bear
भ	bh	...abhor
म	m	...map

**SEMIVOWELS**

य	y	...yet (palatal)
र	r	...road (cereb.)
ल	l	...lull (dental)
व	v	...voice (labial), but more like w when following a consonant, as in <i>swāmī</i> .
ह	h	...hear (guttural)

**SIBILANTS**

श्	ś	...sure (palatal)
ष	sh	...shut (cerebral)
स्	s	...saint (dental)

**ANUSVĀRA**

The dot over Devanāgarī letters represents the nasal of the type of letter it precedes; e.g.: अंग = aṅga. It is transliterated as ṁ or as the actual nasal (ṅ, ṇ, ṁ, ṡ, m). At the end of words it is sometimes म् (m).

**VISĀRGA (:) h**

Pronounced like *huh* (with a short, stopping sound), or *hih*, after i, ī and e.

**ASPIRATES**

The h following a consonant indicates aspiration, the addition of air, as in *nātha* or *bhakti*. Thus, th should not be confused with t in the word then. Special Characters

ज्ञ jñ ...a nasalized sound, like *gya* or *jya*.

क्ष = क्+ ष ksh

**CONVENTIONS**

1. As a rule, the root forms of Sanskrit words are used (without case endings).

2. च्छ is transliterated as cçh, and चच as cch.

3. Geographical and personal names (e.g., *Harwar*), are generally marked with diacriticals only as main lexicon entries. 4. Diacritical marks are not used for Tamil words.



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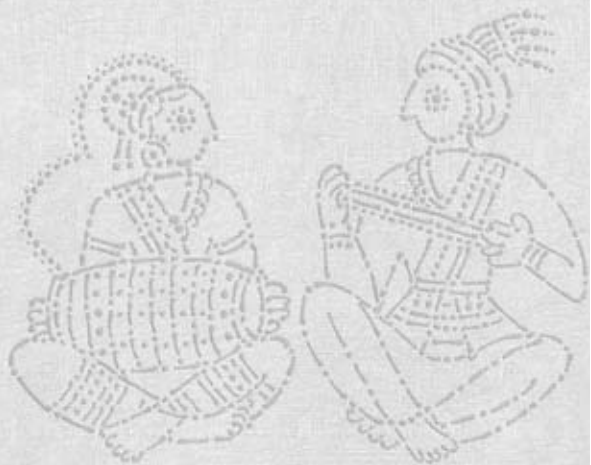
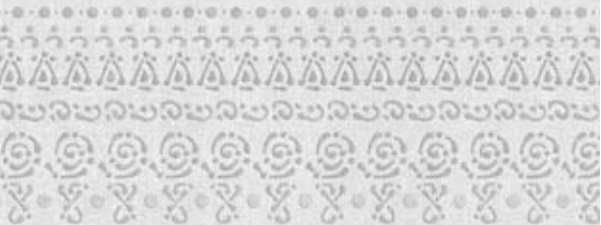
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**SCRIPTURAL ABBREVIATIONS**

- AG: Āgama  
 AGj: Āgama, Jñāna Pāda  
 AGk: Āgama, Kriyā Pāda  
 AV: Atharva Veda  
 BO: Based on  
 Brāh: Brāhmaṇa  
 Brīhad: Brīhadāryaka  
 KYV: Kṛishṇa Yajur Veda  
 RV: Rīg Veda  
 Śata: Śatapatha  
 SYV: Śukla Yajur Veda  
 Śvet: Śvetāśvatara  
 Tait: Taittiriya  
 Mund: Muṇḍāka  
 Sam: Samhitā  
 U: Upanishad

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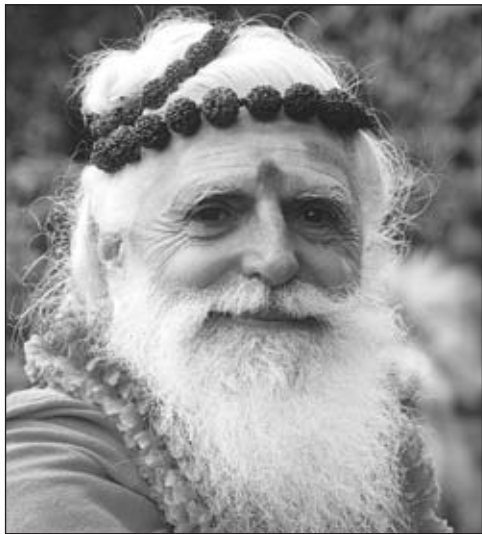
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## About the Author

ONCE IN A GREAT WHILE ON THIS EARTH THERE ARISES A SOUL WHO, BY LIVING HIS TRADITION RIGHTLY AND WHOLLY, PERFECTS HIS PATH AND a becomes a light to the world. Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami (1927-2001) was such a being, a shining example of awakening and wisdom, a leader recognized worldwide as one of Hinduism's foremost ministers. ¶As a youth, he was trained in classical Eastern and Western dance and in the disciplines of *yoga*. Becoming the premier danseur of the San Francisco Ballet by age 19, he renounced the world at the height of his career and traveled to India and Sri Lanka in quest of Absolute Truth. In the caves of Jalani in 1949, he fasted and meditated until he burst into enlightenment. Soon thereafter, he met his *satguru*, Sage Yogaswami, who gave him the name *Subramuniya*, initiated him into the holy orders of *sannyāsa* and ordained him into his lineage with a tremendous slap on the back, saying, "This sound will be heard in America! Now go 'round the world and roar like a lion. You will build palaces (temples) and feed thousands." While in Sri Lanka, he founded Saiva Siddhanta Church, the world's first Hindu church, now active in many nations. In late 1949 he sailed back to America and embarked on seven years of ardent, solitary *yoga* and meditation which brought forth faculties of clairvoyance and clairsaudience, culminating in *Cognizantability*, a collection of profound aphorisms and commentary on the states of mind and esoteric laws of life. In 1957, Subramu-

niyaswami, affectionately known as Gurudeva, founded Himalayan Academy and opened America's first Hindu temple, in San Francisco. He formed his monastic order in 1960. In Switzerland, 1968, he revealed Shūm, a mystical language of meditation that names and maps inner areas of consciousness. From 1967 to 1983 he led fourteen Innersearch pilgrimages, guiding hundreds of devotees to the world's sacred temples and illumined sages. In 1970 Gurudeva established his world headquarters and monastery-temple on Kauai, northernmost of the Hawaiian Islands. Beginning in the 1970s and continuing to 2001, he gave blessings to dozens of groups to build temples in North America, Australia, New Zealand, Europe and elsewhere, gifting Deity images, usually of Lord Gaṇeśa, to 36 temples to begin the worship. Over the years, he personally guided groups of trustees through each stage of temple development. He thus authenticated and legitimized the establishment of the temple as essential to any Hindu community. His relentless drive to establish Hindu worship in the West was based on his revelatory mystic visions of the Gods not as symbolic depictions but as real beings who guide and protect mankind, with whom we can commune most effectively through consecrated temples. ¶ In 1973, after establishing Kadavul Temple, he clairvoyantly read from inner-plane libraries to bring forth *Lemurian Scrolls* and other esoteric writings to guide his monastic order and revive the centrality of celibacy and sexual transmutation. In 1975, following a powerful vision of Lord Śiva, he conceived the San Marga Iraivan Temple on Kauai as the first

all-granite temple established outside of India. In 1977 he intensified requirements for his Western devotees to sever all prior religious, philosophical loyalties, legalize their Hindu name and formally enter Hinduism through the name-giving rite. In 1979 he published *Holy Orders of Sannyāsa*, defining the ideals, vows and aspirations of Hindu monasticism with unprecedented clarity. That same year, he began publishing HINDUISM TODAY magazine. His international Hindu renaissance tours in the early '80s revealed that Hindus were not globally connected or organized. Those in India knew little of their brothers and sisters in South America. Those in Fiji had no knowledge of Hindus in Europe or Mauritius. Seeing this need, Gurudeva focused his journal on uniting all Hindus, regardless of nationality or sect, and inspiring and educating seekers everywhere. Also in 1979, he produced the first edition of his Hindu catechism, later to become *Dancing with Śiva*. ¶His travels in the 1980s brought him face to face with hundreds of thousands of Hindus, most notably in Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia and Mauritius, to whom he spread a powerful message of courage, regenerating pride of heritage. In the early '80s he established the antiquity and legitimacy of monistic Śaiva Siddhānta at international conferences among pundits who had insisted that Siddhānta is solely pluralistic. In 1985 Gurudeva adopted Apple's Macintosh-based publishing technology to supercharge his prolific outreach through scriptures, books, pamphlets, art, lessons and later through CDs and the world's foremost Hindu websites. ¶In 1986 he founded a branch monastery in Mau-

ritius, whose government had invited him there to revive a languishing Hindu faith. That same year, New Delhi's World Religious Parliament named him one of five modern-day Jagadāchāryas, world teachers, for his international efforts in promoting a Hindu renaissance. Also in 1986 he created Pañcha Gaṇapati, a five-day Hindu festival celebrated around the time of Christmas. In 1987 he published *God's Money* to explain tithing and how it is practiced by members of his Hindu church. The year 1989 saw the culmination of numerous books and pamphlets that later became part of the Master Course trilogy. In 1990 in Bangalore, he ceremoniously chipped the first stone of Iraivan temple and established a small village where craftsmen and their families could live and carve this architectural gem by hand over the next fifteen years. In 1991 he produced the *Nandinātha Sūtras*, 365 aphorisms outlining the entire gamut of virtuous Hindu living. In 1994 Gurudeva founded Hindu Heritage Endowment, now a multi-million-dollar public service trust that establishes and maintains permanent sources of income for Hindu institutions worldwide. In 1995 he published the final edition of *Śaiva Dharma Śāstras*, drawing on aspects of the American church system to make his organization socially viable and structurally effective. Therein he finalized patterns for the future, including the extended family structure for his missions, and designated as his successors three of his senior monastics: Acharya Veylanswami, followed by Acharya Palaniswami and then Acharya Ceyonswami. ¶From 1977 to 2001 Gurudeva nurtured a staunchly Hindu, highly disciplined, global fellow-

ship of family initiates, monastics and students, training them to follow the *sādhana mārga*, the path of *yogic* striving and personal transformation, and to assist him in his global mission. With this competent team and a sophisticated infrastructure, his Church nurtures its membership and local missions on five continents and serves, personally and through publications and the Internet, the community of Hindus of all sects. It furthers the dual mission of Hindu solidarity and monistic Śaiva Siddhānta, vowing to protect, preserve and promote the Śaivite Hindu religion as expressed through three pillars: temples, *satgurus* and scripture. The recognized hereditary *guru* of 2.5 million Sri Lankan Hindus, Gurudeva proclaimed his Church a Jaffna-Tamil-based organization which branched out from the Sri Subramuniya Ashram in Alaveddy to meet the needs of the growing Hindu diaspora of this century. It gently oversees some 40 temples worldwide. Missionaries and teachers within the family membership provide counseling and classes in Śaivism for children, youth and adults. Gurudeva's numerous books present his unique and practical insights on Hindu metaphysics, mysticism, culture, philosophy and *yoga*. His *Śaivite Hindu Religion* children's course is taught in many temples and homes, preserving the teachings in five languages for thousands of youths. ¶ In 1995, in Delhi, the World Religious Parliament bestowed on him the title Dharmachakra for his remarkable publications. The Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders for Human Survival chose him as a Hindu representative at its momentous conferences. Thus, at Oxford in 1988, Moscow

in 1990 and Rio de Janeiro in 1992, he joined religious, political and scientific leaders from all countries to discuss the future of human life on this planet. At Chicago's historic centenary Parliament of the World's Religions in September, 1993, he was elected one of three Hindus to the Presidents' Assembly, a core group of 25 men and women voicing the needs of world faiths. Especially in the early '90s he campaigned for fair treatment of temple priests, namely the same respect enjoyed by the clergy of other religions. From 1996 onward, Gurudeva was a key member of Vision Kauai 2020, a group of inspirers (including the Mayor, county council, business and education leaders) that meets to fashion the island's future based on spiritual values. In 1997 he responded to President Clinton's call for religious opinions on the ethics of human cloning. That same year, he spearheaded the 125th anniversary of Satguru Yogaswami and his golden icon's pilgrimage around the world, ending in Sri Lanka. During these final years he worked daily in the morning hours in refining the Shūm language as his supreme gift to his monastic order. ¶ In 1998 Gurudeva began an ardent campaign for the right of children to not be beaten by their parents or their teachers, helping parents raise children with love through Positive Discipline classes taught by his family devotees as their primary community service. In 1999 he traveled to Mauritius to publicly inaugurate his Spiritual Park as a gift to the island nation. In 2000 he published *How to Become a Hindu*, showing the way for seekers to formally enter the faith, refuting the dogma that "You must be born a Hindu to be

a Hindu.” On August 25, 2000, he received the prestigious United Nations U Thant Peace Award in New York (previously bestowed on the Dalai Lama, Nelson Mandela, Mikhail Gorbachev, Pope John Paul II and Mother Teresa). He addressed 1,200 spiritual leaders gathered for the UN Millennium Peace Summit, with the message, “For peace in the world, stop the war in the home.” Upon his return to Kauai, 350 citizens and county and state officials gathered to herald his accomplishments on the island and beyond. Governor Benjamin Cayetano wrote: “I am especially grateful for your efforts to promote moral and spiritual values in Hawaii. May our people forever embrace the message of peace you have so eloquently supported in your gracious wisdom.” In November, 2000, Gurudeva launched Hindu Press International (HPI), a HINDUISM TODAY daily news summary for breaking news sent free via e-mail and posted on the web. In 1999, 2000 and 2001 he conducted three Innersearch journeys, taking devotees to Alaska, the Caribbean and Northern Europe, consecrating new temples in Alaska, Trinidad and Denmark. In 2001 he completed his golden legacy, the 3,000-page Master Course trilogy of *Dancing*, *Living* and *Merging with Siva*—peerless volumes of daily lessons on Hindu philosophy, culture and *yoga*, respectively. ¶For fifty years, Subramuniyaswami taught Hinduism to Hindus and seekers from all faiths. Known as one of the strictest *gurus* in the world, he was the 162nd successor of the Nandinātha Kailāsa lineage and *satguru* of Kauai Aadheenam, his 458-acre temple-monastery complex on the Garden Island of Kauai. From this verdant

Polynesian *aśrama* on a river bank near the foot of an extinct volcano, his monastics continue to promote the *dharma* together through Saiva Siddhanta Church, Himalayan Academy and Hindu Heritage Endowment, perpetuating the mission given to Gurudeva by his *satguru*. ¶Gurudeva departed from this world as courageously as he had lived in it. Learning on October 9, 2001, that he had advanced, metastacized intestinal cancer, confirmed by a host of specialists in three states, all concurring that even the most aggressive treatment regimens would not prove effective, he declined any treatment beyond palliative measures and decided to follow the Indian yogic practice, called *prāyopaveśa* in Sanskrit scripture, to abstain from nourishment and take water only from that day on. He left his body peacefully on the 32nd day of his self-declared fast, at 11:54 pm on Monday, Chitra *nakshatra*, November 12, 2001, surrounded by his twenty-three monastics. Gurudeva consoled them, “Don’t be sad. When I am gone from this world, I will be working with you on the inside twenty-four hours a day.” The rock-solid foundation for the continuance of his work is Kauai Aadheenam and its resident Saiva Siddhanta Yoga Order. This group of twelve initiated *swāmīs* with lifetime vows and ten *brahmachārīs*, celibate monks, come from six countries and include both men born into the Hindu religion and those who converted or adopted Hinduism—Asians and Westerners—made strong by decades of Gurudeva’s loving but strict personal guidance and insistence on 110 percent performance. In the first weeks of his fast, Gurudeva seamlessly transferred his duties and



responsibilities to his chosen successor, Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami, 59, a disciple for 37 years, declaring, “Bodhinatha is the new *satguru* now.” Ever concerned for others, even on his deathbed, just days before his Great Union, he whispered in assurance, “Everything that is happening is good. Everything that is happening is meant to be.” He asked devotees worldwide to carry his work and institutions forward with unstinting vigor, to keep one another strong on the spiritual path, to live in harmony and to work diligently on their personal spiritual *sādhana*s. “You are all over-qualified to carry on.” ¶ When notified of Gurudeva’s passing, Sita Ram Goel, one of India’s most influential Hindu writers and thinkers, wrote, “He has done great work for Hinduism, and the recent reawakening of the Hindu mind carries his stamp.” Ma Yoga Shakti, renowned *yoga* teacher, said, “For more than five decades, Subramuniyaswami, a highly enlightened soul of the West—a Hanuman of today, a reincarnation of Śiva Himself—has watered the roots of Hinduism with great zeal, faith, enthusiasm and whole-heartedness.” Sri Shivarudra Balayogi Maharaj of India said, “By his life and by his teaching, Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami has helped make Hinduism an even greater gift to humanity.” From Jaffna, president of Sivathondan Nilayam Arunasalam Sellathurai Swamigal wrote: “The life, mission and mandate of His Holiness Sivaya Subramuniyaswami form an epic chapter in his unending spiritual quest leading him to the founding of the Saiva Siddhanta Church and a monastic order in Hawaii—a magnificent task! This will ever remain a monument to his

spiritual fervor, proclaiming worldwide, East and West, in trumpet tones that Swamigal was a trailblazer of Lord Śiva's choice to glorify the spiritual heritage and the essence of Śaiva Siddhānta." ¶ Gurudeva's life was one of extraordinary accomplishments on so many levels; but his greatest *siddhi*, to which thousands of devotees will testify, was his incredible power to inspire others toward God, to change their lives in ways that are otherwise impossible, to be a light on their path, a mother and father and friend to all who drew near. Gurudeva lived so profoundly at the center of himself, so close to the core of being, the heart of Divinity, that everyone he met felt close to him. He personified the pure, blissful soul nature they sought and sensed as the center of themselves.

## Milestones of Ministry

### *Enumerating a Spiritual Master's Many Gifts to Mankind*

Empowered by his Self Realization, his ordination as a *satguru* and the blessings of Gods and *devas*, Gurudeva contributed to the revival of Hinduism in immeasurable abundance. He was simultaneously a staunch defender of traditions, as the proven ways of the past, and a fearless innovator, rivaling the *rishis* of Vedic times in instilling fresh understanding and setting new patterns of life for contemporary humanity. Here is a partial list of his trail-blazing mission and accomplishments.

### SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS

- Bringing seekers new meaning to life through *The Master Course* as a path of self-transformation through *sādhana*, a self-initiated journey to bravely, cheerfully face the *karma* one has created in the past.
- Pioneering the language Shūm in 1968 to enhance seekers' *yogic* efforts and vigorously developing it from 1995 to 2001, as his choicest inner gift to his monastics.
- Bringing the Gods "out of exile" by explaining and writing about the mysteries of temple worship and the three worlds of existence from his own experience.
- Unfolding theological summations for a religion in renaissance, such as "Four Facts of Hinduism," "Nine Beliefs," "Hinduism's Code of Conduct," the 365 *Nandinatha Sutras*, and a Hindu catechism and creed.
- Bringing forth *Lemurian Scrolls* and other esoteric writings from inner-plane libraries to guide his monastic order and revive the centrality of celibacy and sexual transmutation.
- Translating and publishing Tiruvalluvar's ethical masterpiece, the *Tirukural*, in modern, lucid English.

### LEADING THE HINDU RENAISSANCE

- Building Hindu pride; convincing Hindus everywhere to stand up and proclaim themselves Hindus and stop repeating equivocal slogans like, "I'm not really a Hindu. I am a universalist—a Christian, a Jew, a Muslim and a Buddhist."
- Proclaiming that Hinduism is a great, living religion,

not a archeologic relic of the past as oft depicted by Western scholars—one that should be presented by Hindu writers, as he did in his peerless publications.

- Teaching Hinduism to Hindus, awakening their self-appreciation as a world community, blessed inheritors of a grand civilization and culture, indeed, the religion best suited to the new age.
- Rescuing the word *Hinduism* from its fallen status as a dirty word and restoring it to its age-old glory.
- Heralding sectarianism when the prevailing trend was bland uniformity, insisting that only if each denomination is strong and faithful to its unique traditions will Hinduism itself be strong.
- Championing the centrality of temples, legitimizing their establishment, and authenticating their purpose.

### CORRECTIVE CAMPAIGNS

- Dispelling myths and misinformation about Hinduism through HINDUISM TODAY for two decades.
- Promoting the *Vedas* and *Āgamas* as the holy bible of Hinduism, rather than the mythological *Purāṇas* and the historical *Bhagavad Gītā*.
- Establishing rational mystical explanations for Hindu practice to displace the Purāṇic “comic book” mentality.
- Reinstating *ahimsā*, noninjury, as the cardinal ethic of Hinduism when militants were promoting righteous retaliation, often by citing the *Bhagavad Gītā*.
- Rejecting traditional stories that glorify violence, such as many found in the *Periyapurānam*.

- Repopularizing Śiva as a God of love to be worshiped by all devotees, not a fearsome being approached only by ascetics. Assuring Hindus it is all right, in fact necessary, to have Lord Śiva in the home.
- Speaking for the purity of Hindu monasticism and against the idea of “married *swāmīs*” and mixed-gender *āśramas*.
- Campaigning against the use of illegal drugs by exposing the harmful effects and *karmic* consequences.
- Combatting unethical Christian conversion by enhancing Hindu education, exposing the devious tactics of evangelists and the immaturity of faiths that consider theirs the only true path and aggressively seek to compel others to adopt it.
- Debunking the notion that “All religions are one” and publishing a comparative summary of the major religions of the world, side by side with prominent secular philosophies.
- Enjoining temple boards of trustees to get along with each other, to beware of detractors and to establish teaching programs for the youth.

### RELIGIOUS STATESMANSHIP

- Providing a fearless, outspoken Hindu voice at inter-faith conferences and spiritual and political forums, objecting to Christian hegemony at such gatherings, calling for equal representation by other religions, including the indigenous peoples, and decrying the hypocrisy of scientists who would speak as potential

saviors for Earth's problems when science itself had caused many of the predicaments.

- Defending advaitic Śaiva Siddhānta at international conferences and with pundits of South Indian *aadheenams* to successfully affirm the legitimacy and antiquity of the nondual theology which so perfectly reflected his own realizations.
- Creating a method of ethical self-conversion for seekers to formally enter the Hindu religion, insisting that Hinduism has always accepted newcomers, refuting the notion that "You must be born a Hindu to be a Hindu."
- Encouraging people to practice their religion, whatever it may be, rather than nonreligious paths such as materialism, communism, existentialism and secular humanism.

### PIONEERING NEW PATTERNS

- Harnessing information technology to drive Hindu Dharma into the new millennium, including setting up the first Macintosh publishing network (1986) and founding the first major Hindu website (1994). In 1997 he launched TAKA, "Today at Kauai Aadheenam," to chronicle daily activities at his Kauai and Mauritius centers. He observed, "Now we have computers and the Internet—modern technology capable of bringing the spiritual beings and all religious people of the world closely together wherever they live. This one thing the typewriter could not do, the pen and paper could not do, the stylus and *olai* leaf did not do."

- Calling for the establishment of schools, *pathasalas*, to train temple priests outside of India.
- Promoting the idea of resident facilities for the elderly to live together close to temples in the West.
- Gifting Deity icons, usually of Gaṇeśa, to initiate the worship and remove obstacles at 36 temples globally.
- Establishing perpetual funds to finance his own and others' religious endeavors through Hindu Heritage Endowment.
- Finding ways for Hindus to meet cultural dilemmas in the modern age, such as devising a new festival, Pañcha Gaṇapati, celebrated for five days around the time of Christmas.
- Supporting cross-national marriages within his congregation and to the wider Hindu world.
- Drawing from the American church system to make his organization, and other Hindu institutions, socially viable, legally strong and structurally effective.
- Encouraging selfless, religious giving of one's time, resources and finances, and establishing tithing as a monthly practice within his global congregation.
- Establishing Innersearch Travel Study as a means of self-discovery and spiritual renewal for devotees and students, with his last three journeys consecrating new temples in Alaska, Trinidad and Denmark.
- Distinguishing outstanding leadership with his Hindu of the Year award.
- Introducing to Kauai: Toggenberg goats, Jersey cows, the honey bee industry and many species of exotic flora.

### REVIVING NOBLE TRADITIONS

- Bringing sacraments, *saṁskāras*, back into vogue through his writings and by implementing them among his congregation with reverence and formal documentation.
- Campaigning for priests' rights and fair treatment, demanding they receive the same respect enjoyed by the clergy of other religions.
- Supporting and reviving the traditional arts, especially South Indian painting, with which he illustrated his trilogy; Indian dance, which he and his followers learned and taught; temple architecture, which he embodied in Iraivan Temple; Vedic astrology, which he used daily for its insights into character of people and timing of events; and *āyurveda*, which he promoted in his publications and encouraged as a natural healing system for his followers.
- Rescuing the home shrine from extinction—"out of the closet, into the most beautiful room of the home."

### STRENGTHENING MONASTICISM

- Garnering respect for Hindu monastics of every order when "*swāmī* bashing" was common, proclaiming that *swāmīs* and *sādhus* are the ministers of this noble faith and that genuine *gurus* should be venerated, obeyed and sought out for their wisdom.
- Creating a global enclave of several hundred Hindu leaders and regularly calling on them for their wisdom on critical issues, from abortion, to cloning, to medical



ethics and Hindu family life, publishing their collective views in *HINDUISM TODAY*.

- Breathing new life into the *aadheenams* of South India (temple-monastery complexes), bringing new prominence to the Saṅkarāchārya centers and to the seats of power of all monastic lineages.
- Codifying in his *Holy Orders of Sannyāsa* the ideals, vows and aspirations of Hindu monasticism in unprecedented clarity and detail.

### IMPROVING FAMILY LIFE

- Upholding the integrity of the family, extolling the extended family, finding ways to keep families close and harmonious, declaring that divorce is never a happy solution to marital conflict.
- Denouncing and taking action against wife abuse as a despicable act that no man has the right to perpetrate.
- Insisting on “zero tolerance for disharmonious conditions” within his monasteries and the homes of followers.
- Protecting children from abuse, standing up for their right to not be beaten by parents or teachers and debunking the notion that corporal punishment is a part of Hindu culture.
- Helping parents raise children with love and respect through Positive Discipline classes taught by his family devotees as a primary service to the community.
- Establishing a counter “women’s liberation movement,” reminding Hindus that family well-being lies

in the hands of women, who with their special *śakti* are uniquely able raise their children well and make their husbands successful by not working in the world, but following the traditional role of wife and mother. Setting standards in leadership

- Creating Kauai Aadheenam, a temple-monastery in Hawaii so traditional and spiritual—replete with two Śiva temples, a large monastic order and a *satguru pīṭha* (seat of authority), all amid religious art, sculpture, traditional temple architecture and liturgy—that it stands as the most authoritative *aadheenam* in the West.
- Manifesting Iraivan, the first all-stone Āgamic temple in the West.
- Initiating and nurturing a traditional order of two dozen celibate Śaiva monastics, molding them into an effective, harmonious, traditional multi-national team.
- Building two platforms: Hindu solidarity, which he promoted through HINDUISM TODAY, and monistic Śaiva Siddhānta, which he elucidated in his eloquent and prolific publications.
- Being always available: personally greeting thousands of Hindu visitors to his *aadheenam*, speaking with them about their lives, concerns and aspirations.
- Fulfilling the motto “Think globally, act locally,” joining monthly with Kauai leaders in an island visioning group to help manifest an enhanced social and economic future.

## Other Books from Himalayan Academy [www.HimalayanAcademy.com](http://www.HimalayanAcademy.com)

*Dancing with Śiva, Hinduism's Contemporary Catechism* (unabridged, color edition): A sourcebook of Indian spirituality exploring how to see God everywhere.

*Living with Śiva, Hinduism's Contemporary Culture*: 365 daily lessons based on ancient Vedic laws, disclosing how to approach family, money, relationships, food, worship, yoga and *karma* to live a truly spiritual life.

*Merging with Śiva, Hinduism's Contemporary Metaphysics*: 365 lessons from a mystical master, revealing *rāja yoga*, the states of mind and the destiny of every seeker.

*Lemurian Scrolls, Angelic Prophecies Revealing Human Origins*: An illustrated clairvoyant revelation of man's untold journey to Earth from the Pleiades millions of years ago, and the struggles faced through the eras.

*Weaver's Wisdom, Ancient Precepts for a Perfect Life*: A South Indian sage, Tiruvalluvar, tells us of friends and foes, family, God, business, law, spies, love, hate and all that's human in his classic masterpiece, the *Tirukural*.

*Loving Gaṇeśa, Hinduism's Endearing Elephant-Faced God*: An illustrated resource on *dharma's* benevolent Deity, remover of obstacles, patron of art and science.

*How to Become a Hindu, A Guide for Seekers and Born Hindus*: A history-making manual, interreligious study and names list, with stories by Westerners who entered Hinduism and Hindus who deepened their faith.